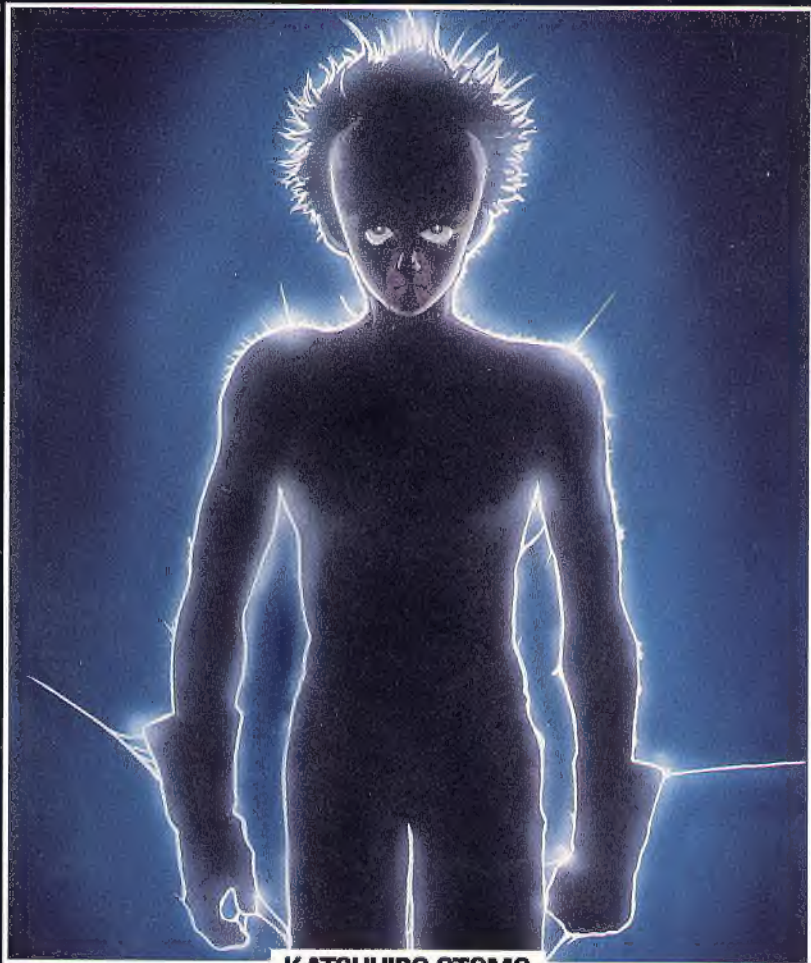



# AKIRA 3™

 EPIC

COMICS • \$3.50 • \$4.75 CAN. • VOL. 1, NO. 3



**KATSUHIRO OTOMO**



Published monthly by EPIC COMICS.  
A New World Company  
Office of Publication:  
387 Park Avenue South,  
New York, NY 10016

**AKIRA Vol. 1, No. 3**

Copyright © 1988 MASH•ROOM Co., Ltd.  
All rights reserved.

First published in Japan in 1984  
by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.

No part of this book may be printed  
or reproduced in any manner  
whatsoever, whether mechanical or  
electronic, without the  
written permission of the author  
and publisher. The stories,  
characters, and incidents in this  
publication are entirely  
fictional. All characters appearing  
in this book and their  
distinctive likenesses are trademarks  
of MASH•ROOM Co., Ltd.

English language translation copyright  
© 1988 MASH•ROOM Co., Ltd. and  
Kodansha Ltd. All rights reserved.

"Epic Comics" is a registered trademark  
of EPIC COMICS.

# AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 3

**NUMBER 41!**

## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE



cycle run into the old city to check out the old site and found far more than they expected. In an area said to be totally deserted, they encounter a strange, wizened-faced child, known only as **Number 26**. He is terrified of something and is possessed of extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

Kaneda's gang find themselves in serious trouble with the authorities following the incident, and they learn, to their surprise, that the "police" they encountered after the accident were not normal officers at all, but part of some secret concern. Moreover, **Tetsuo**, who they believed had been taken to a hospital, has disappeared.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** brazenly attempts to pick up **Kay**, a strange girl who catches his fancy. **Kay**, however, is not interested. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance organization, dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

During the mayhem that ensues, both the delinquents and

**T**he year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

**Kaneda** and his friends—teenaged delinquents from the local vocational school—have made an unauthorized motor-



Kaneda



Tetsuo



Kay



Ryu



the resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26**, and again he uses his powers, to catastrophic effect. Both groups are scattered, but first **Ryu** and then **Kaneda** re-encounter **Number 26**. **Ryu** attempts to reassure the paranormal boy, but **Kaneda** is anxious to punish him for injuring **Tetsuo**.

As they argue, the mysterious soldiers pursuing **Number 26** reach the scene, armed and ready.

During the resulting firefight, **Kaneda** is separated from **Ryu** and **Number 26**, whom the soldiers are determined to recapture alive. **Kay** saves **Kaneda's** life, but **Ryu** and **Number 26** are cornered, and **Number 26** becomes increasingly ill, exhibiting all the symptoms of drug withdrawal. **Kaneda** returns the favor he owes the resistance

fighters by stealing a truck and heading back into the heart of the melee to save **Ryu** and **Number 26**.

That is when the mysterious **Colonel** in charge of the entire covert operation puts in an appearance, bringing forward his secret weapon—**Number 27**, a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru**.

**Masaru** astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi. Kay** and **Ryu** had previously assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as-yet unseen paranormal giant code-named **Akira**.

**Kaneda** provokes a crisis by pretending to be on the verge of killing **Takashi**, and **Takashi** responds to the stress this causes by telekinetic upheavals that virtually destroy the entire



**Takashi**



**The Colonel**



**Masaru**



**Yamagata**



area. During the course of the cataclysm, **Kaneda** is again separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi**, who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

The next day, **Tetsuo** reappears in school, seemingly little the worse for his experiences. However, during the course of his treatment, it has come to the attention of **the Colonel** and his followers that **Tetsuo** has great psychic potential and would be a valuable asset to them.

**Kaneda** talks his girlfriend—who works in the school infirmary and keeps his entire band of delinquents supplied with drugs—into analyzing the drug intended for **Takashi**, and she tells him that it is similar in substance to what he and his friends take, but unbelievably concentrated and powerful.

Eager for action, **Kaneda**, **Tetsuo** and their gang head out for a rumble with their chief rivals—the vicious **Clown** gang.



**Kaneda's  
Girl Friend**



**Government  
Soldier**



**Harukiya  
Bartender**

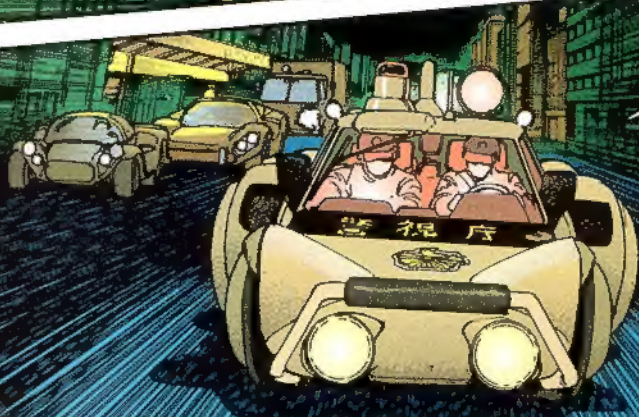


**Resistance  
Agent**

AAAAA00000

AAAAA00000

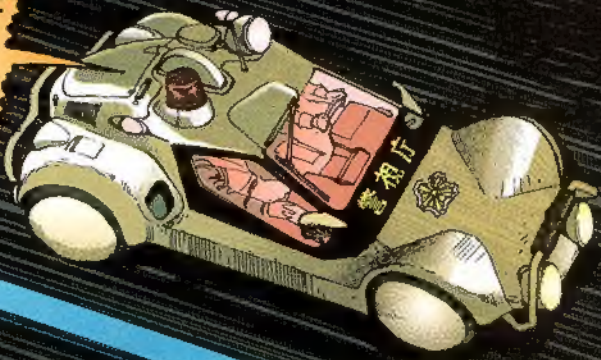
THIS IS THE POLICE! YOU ARE IN VIOLATION OF THE LAW! PULL OVER TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD!

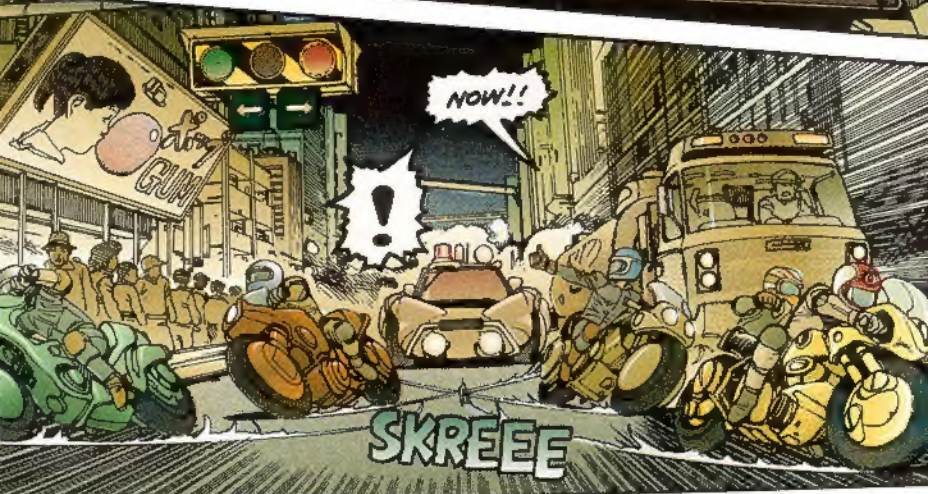


YOU WANNA BUST US, YOU HAVE TO WORK FOR IT!



THIS IS CAR #375. A BAND OF MOTORCYCLISTS DRIVING WITH EXTREME RECKLESSNESS IS HEADING SOUTH, AWAY FROM US, ON HIGHWAY #14. REQUEST OTHER VEHICLES TAKE POSITION TO INTERCEPT...





**DRRRRRRN**



HEH-HEH-HEH...  
THIS IS GREAT!



HUNH?

**ZZZZZZON**

**ZZZZZZON**

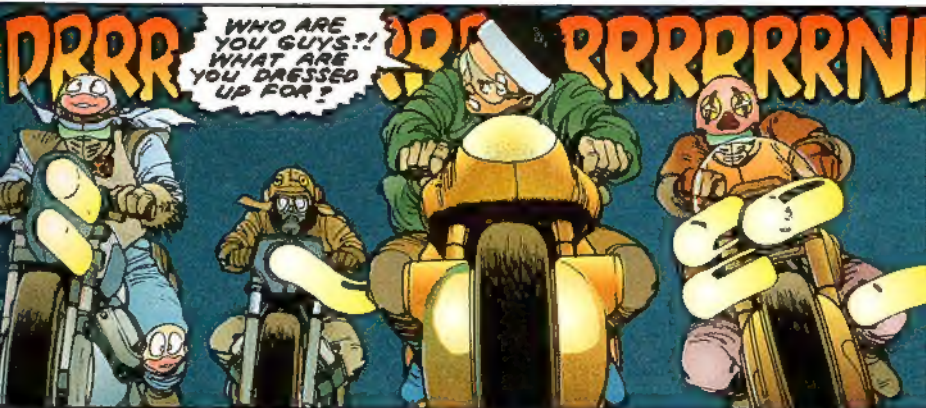


**DRRRR**

WHO ARE  
YOU GUYS?!!  
WHAT ARE  
YOU DRESSED  
UP FOR?

**DR**

**RRRRRRRN**

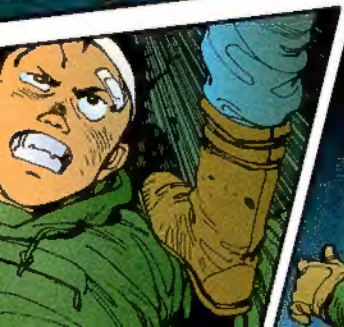
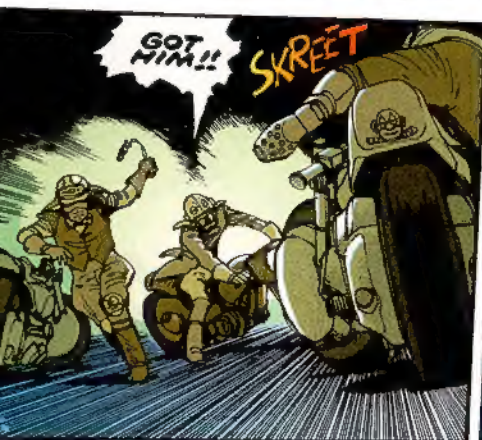


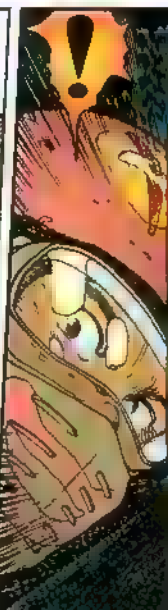
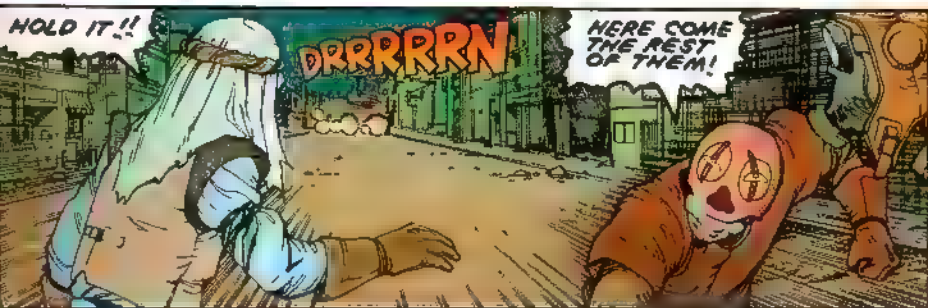
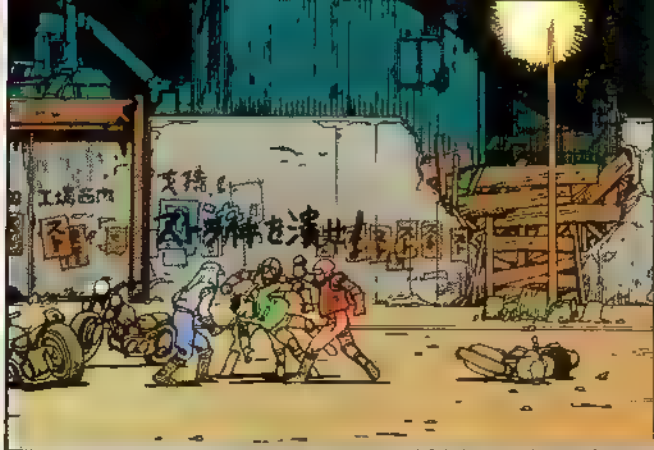
CHIK

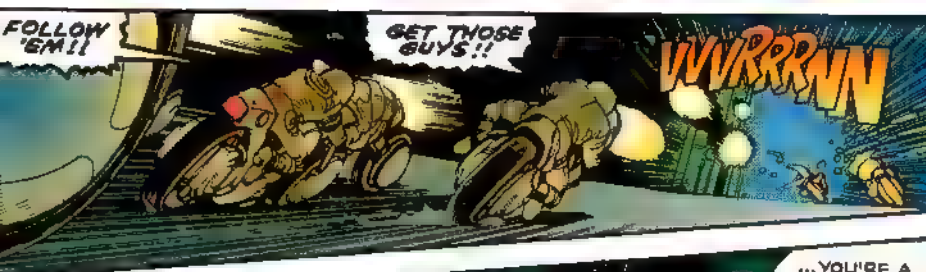
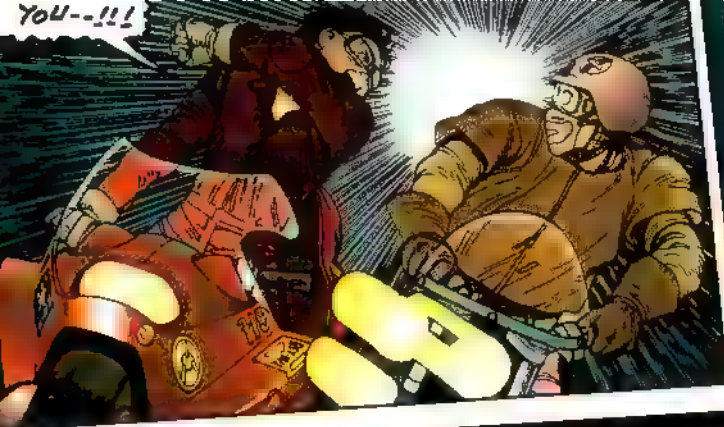


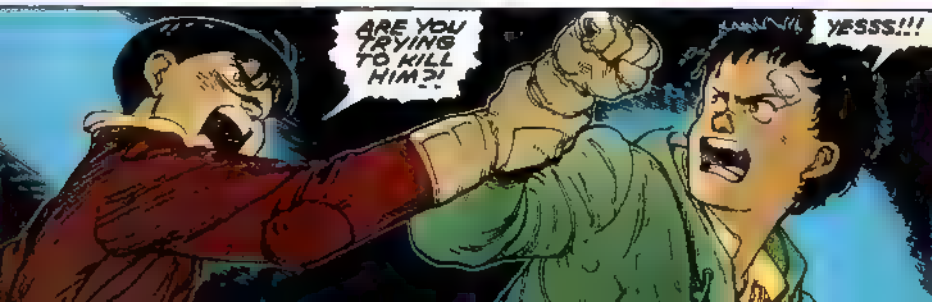
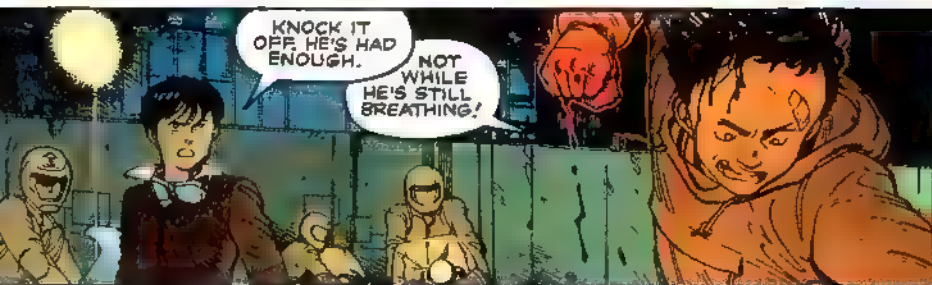
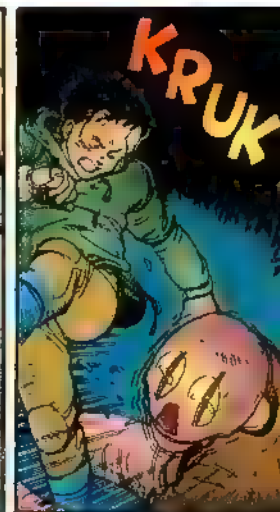
ACK

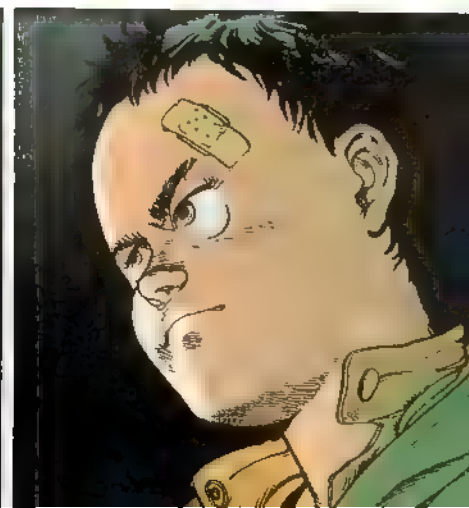
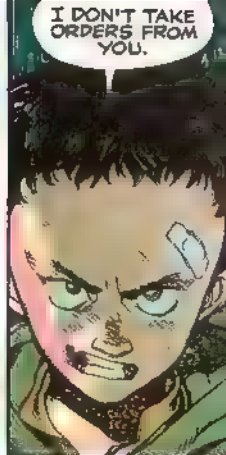
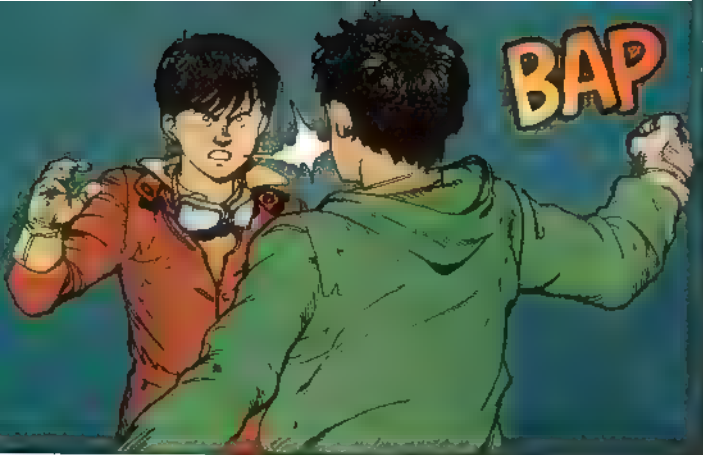
**CHUNK**

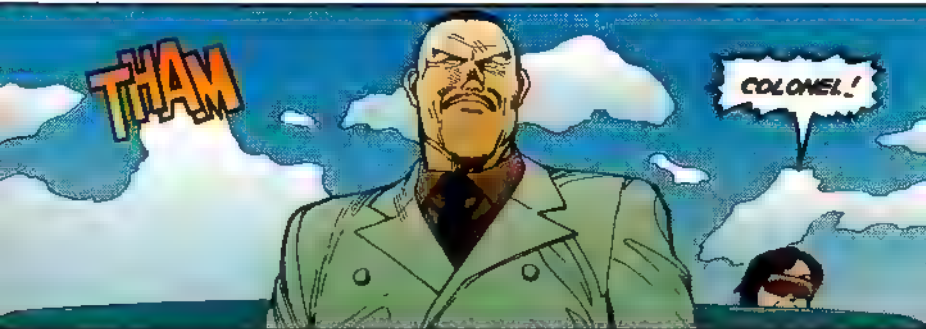










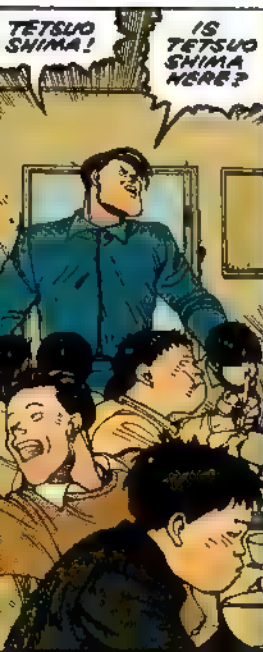
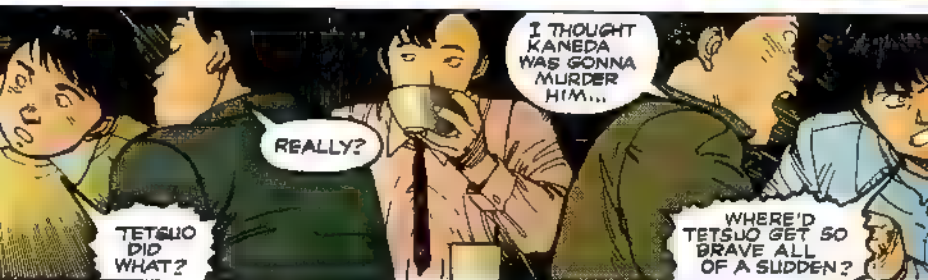
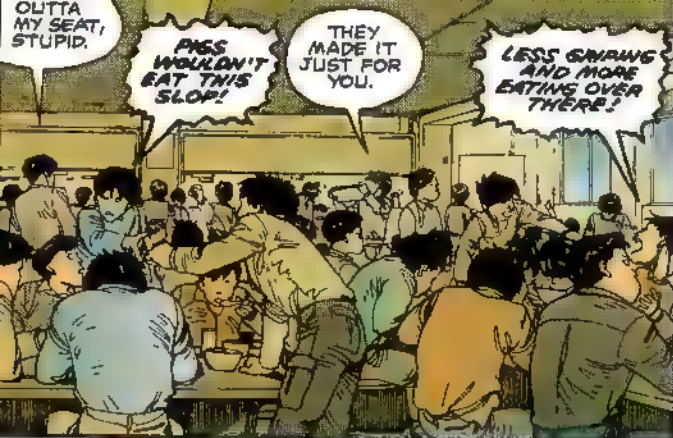


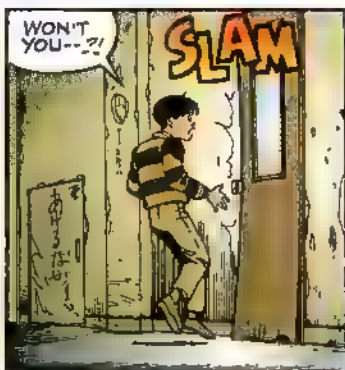
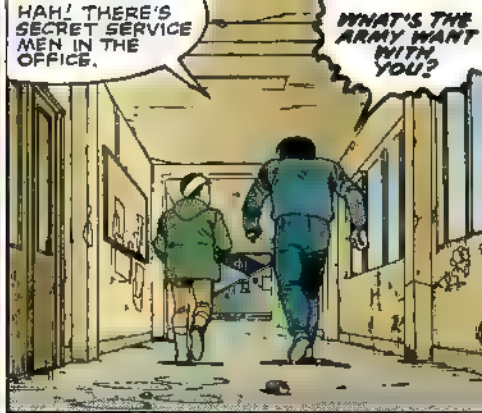
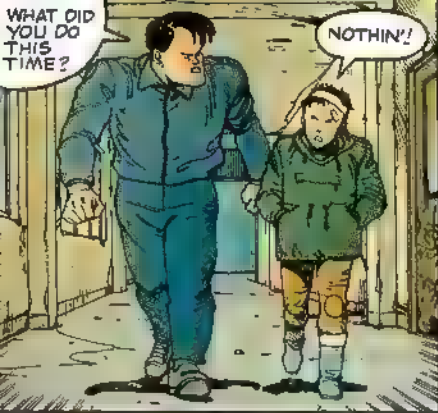
OUTTA  
MY SEAT,  
STUPID.

PIGS  
WOULDN'T  
EAT THIS  
SLOP!

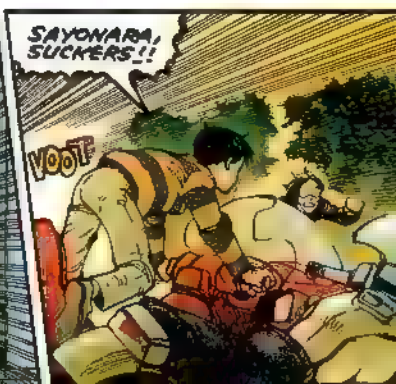
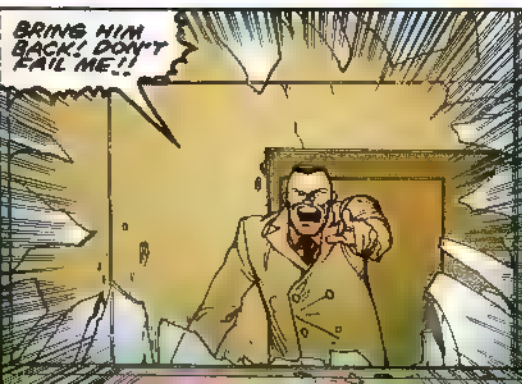
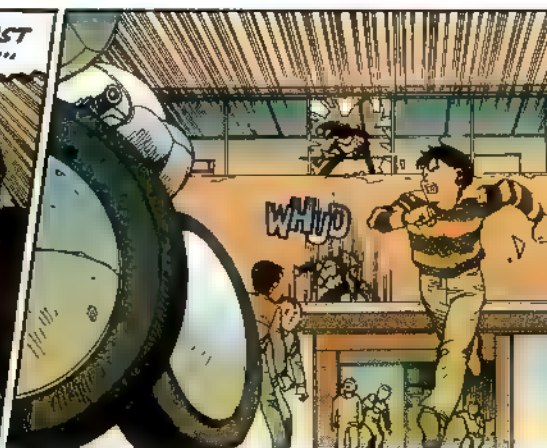
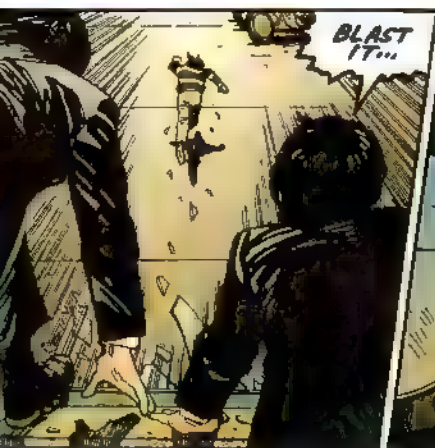
THEY  
MADE IT  
JUST FOR  
YOU.

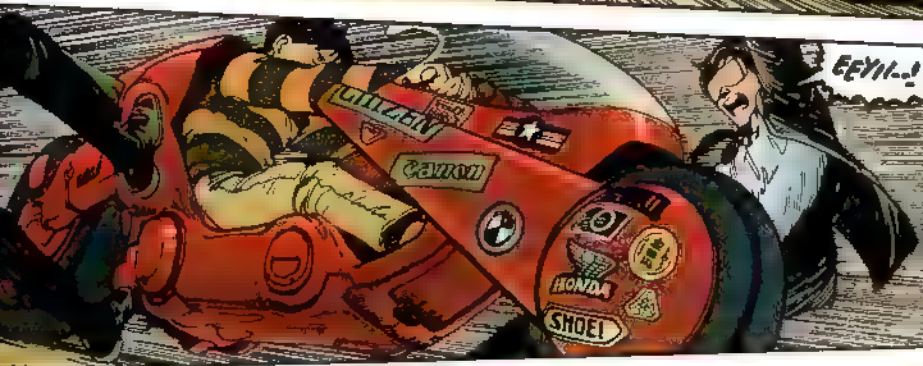
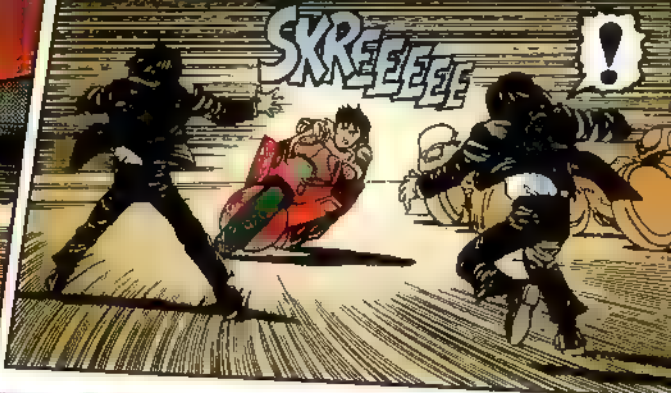
LESS GRAWING  
AND MORE  
EATING OVER  
THERE!

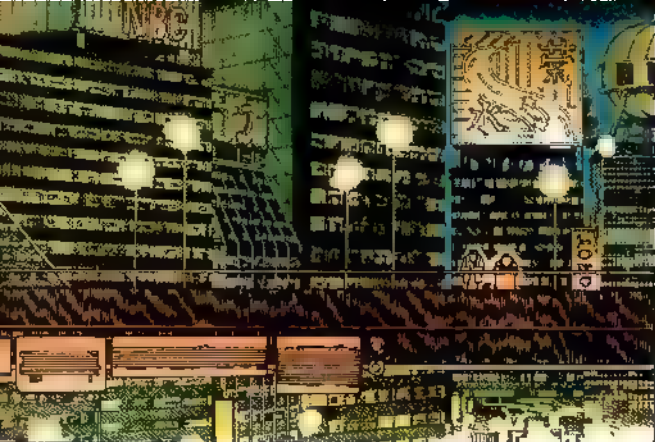




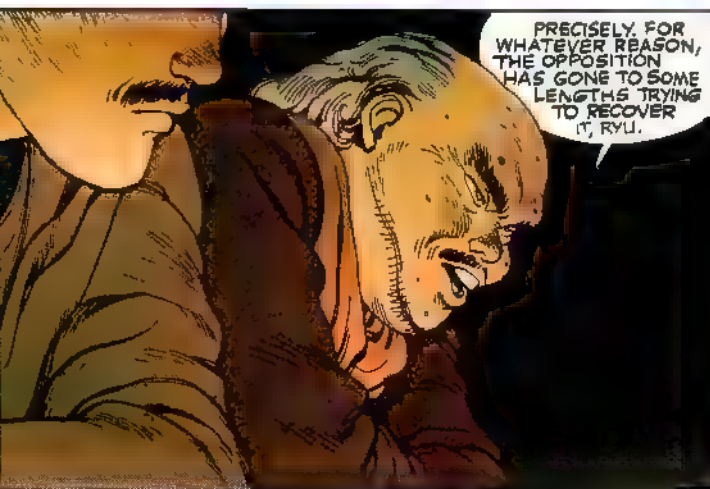








THE PILL...?



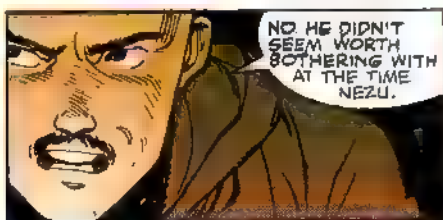
PRECISELY. FOR WHATEVER REASON, THE OPPOSITION HAS GONE TO SOME LENGTHS TRYING TO RECOVER IT, RYU.



THAT KID MADE OFF WITH IT IN ALL THE CONFUSION.



DO YOU KNOW HIS IDENTITY?



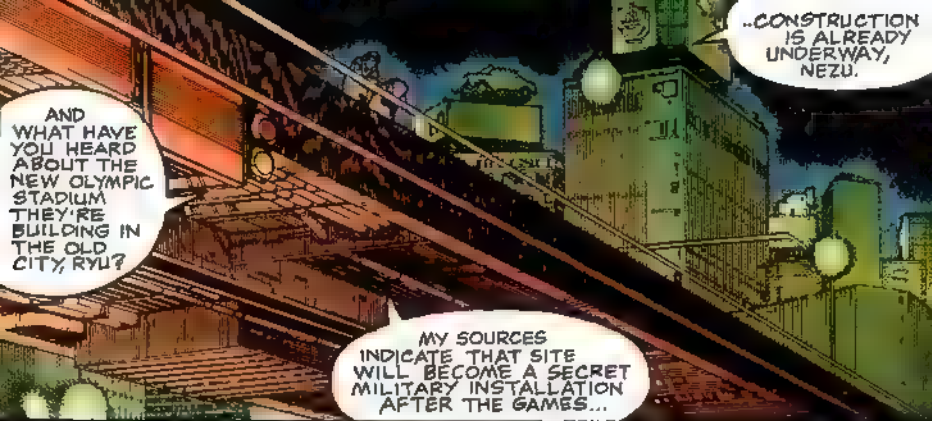
NO HE DIDN'T SEEM WORTH BOTHERING WITH AT THE TIME NEZU.



IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT WE LOCATE HIM.



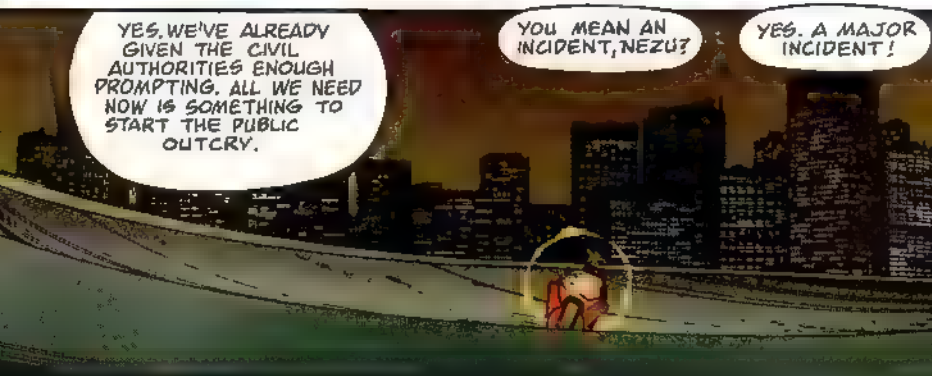
BUT--!  
...BEFORE THE OTHER SIDE DOES



AND  
WHAT HAVE  
YOU HEARD  
ABOUT THE  
NEW OLYMPIC  
STADIUM  
THEY'RE  
BUILDING IN  
THE OLD  
CITY, RYU?

...CONSTRUCTION  
IS ALREADY  
UNDERWAY,  
NEZU.

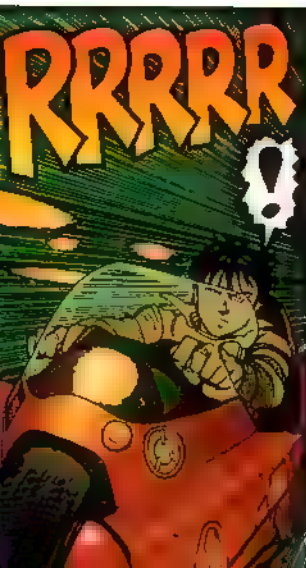
MY SOURCES  
INDICATE THAT SITE  
WILL BECOME A SECRET  
MILITARY INSTALLATION  
AFTER THE GAMES...



YES, WE'VE ALREADY  
GIVEN THE CIVIL  
AUTHORITIES ENOUGH  
PROMPTING. ALL WE NEED  
NOW IS SOMETHING TO  
START THE PUBLIC  
OUTCRY.

YOU MEAN AN  
INCIDENT, NEZU?

YES. A MAJOR  
INCIDENT!



RRRRRR



SITE OF THE 2031 TOKYO  
OLYMPICS NO UNAUTHORIZED  
VEHICLES ALLOWED



HAH!

**YOU  
INCOMPETENT  
IMBECILES!!**

**WHAM**

**YESSIR!**

**WE'RE  
SORRY,  
SIR!**

**NOT AS SORRY  
AS YOU'LL BE  
FOR FAILING  
ME!**

**creak**

**NOW GET OUT  
OF HERE!  
YOU'RE  
WASTING MY  
TIME.**

**WHAT  
WAS  
THAT ALL  
ABOUT?**

**NOTHING  
THAT CONCERNS  
YOU.**

**WHAT HAVE YOU  
DONE WITH...  
TETSUO SHIMA,  
ISN'T THAT HIS  
NAME?**

I'VE GIVEN HIM  
A SEDATIVE TOMORROW,  
WHEN HE WAKES UP, WE  
CAN BEGIN INTENSIVE  
EXAMINATIONS.

WHEN MAY  
I EXPECT  
YOUR  
REPORT?

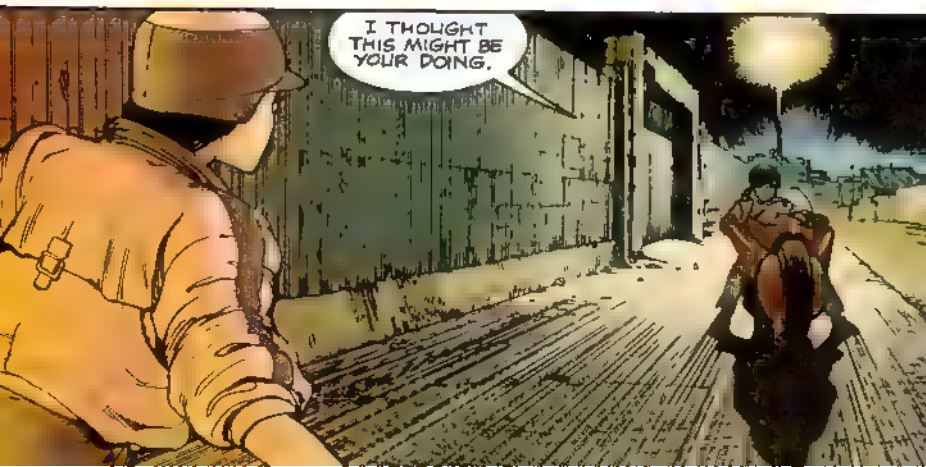
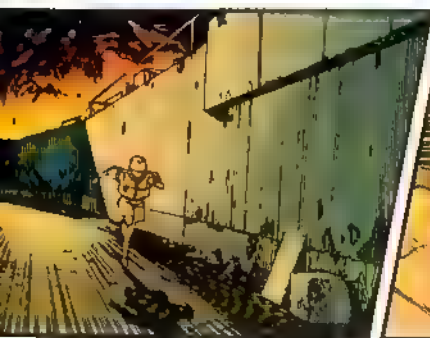
IT WILL TAKE ABOUT  
THREE WEEKS TO  
COMPILE ALL THE  
DATA.

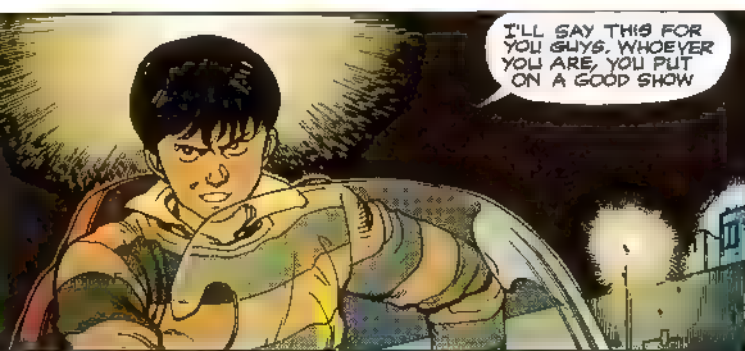
**KROOM**

WHAT...?!

IT  
CAME FROM  
THE OLD  
CITY.

COULD IT  
HAVE BEEN  
THE OLYMPIC  
SITE?





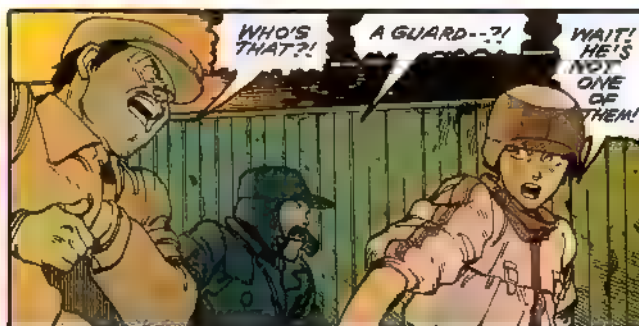
I'LL SAY THIS FOR YOU GUYS. WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU PUT ON A GOOD SHOW



ΣMNHΣ



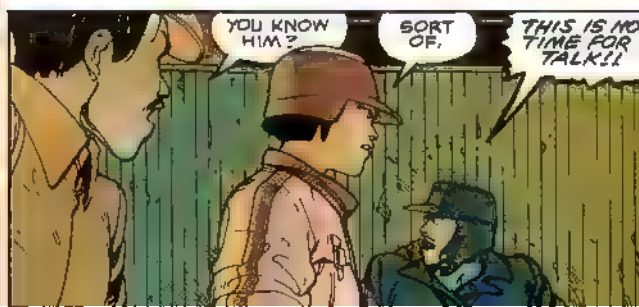
KJAY, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?! WE HAVE TO GO!!



WHO'S THAT?!

A GUARD--?!

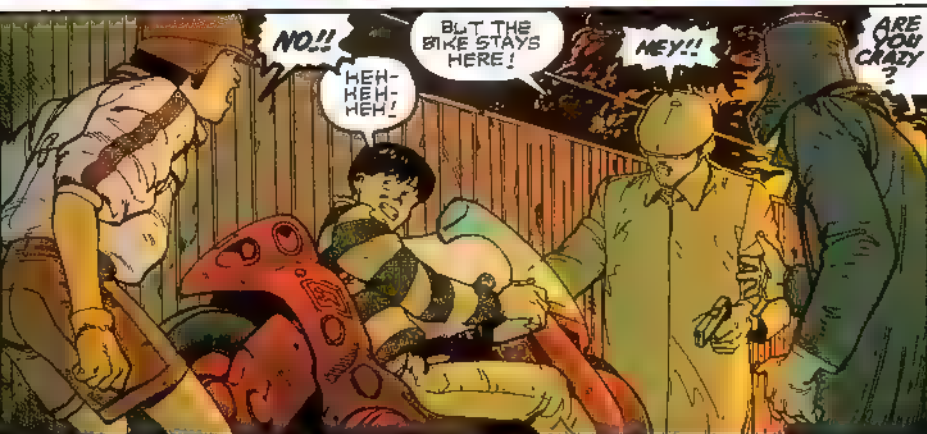
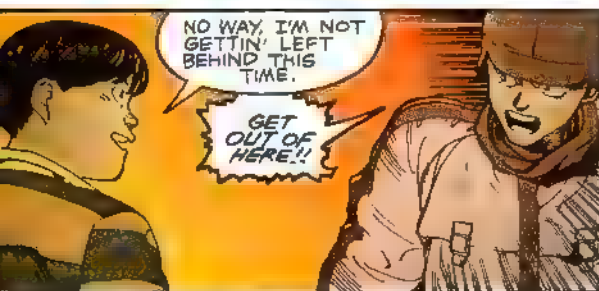
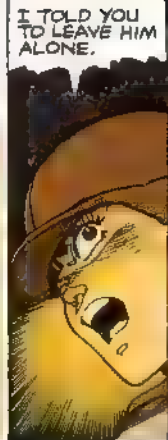
WAIT! HE'S NOT ONE OF THEM!



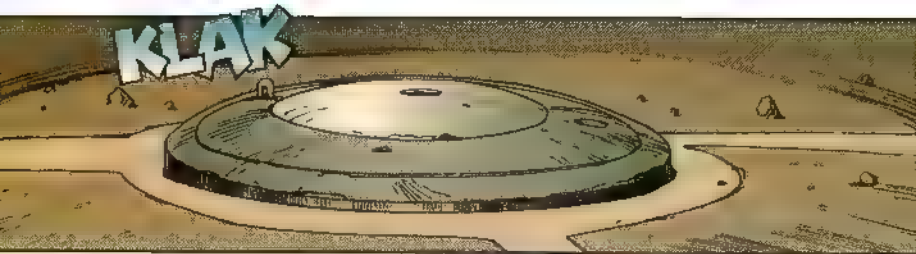
YOU KNOW HIM?

SORT OF,

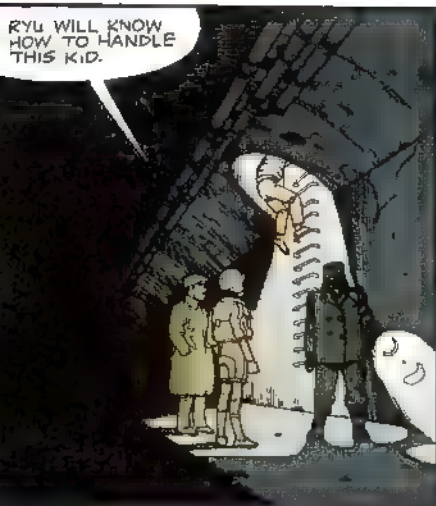
THIS IS NO TIME FOR TALK!!



**KLAK**



RYU WILL KNOW  
HOW TO HANDLE  
THIS KID.

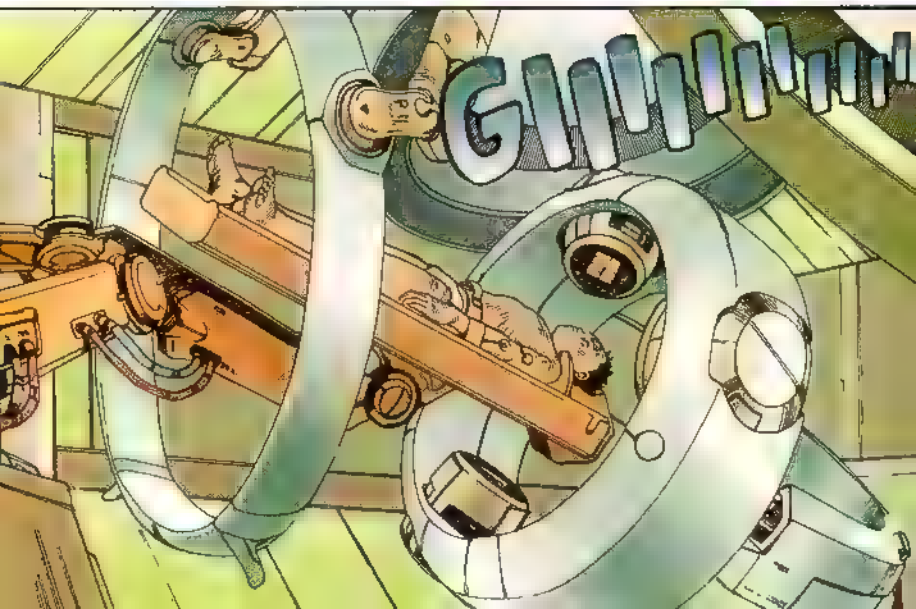


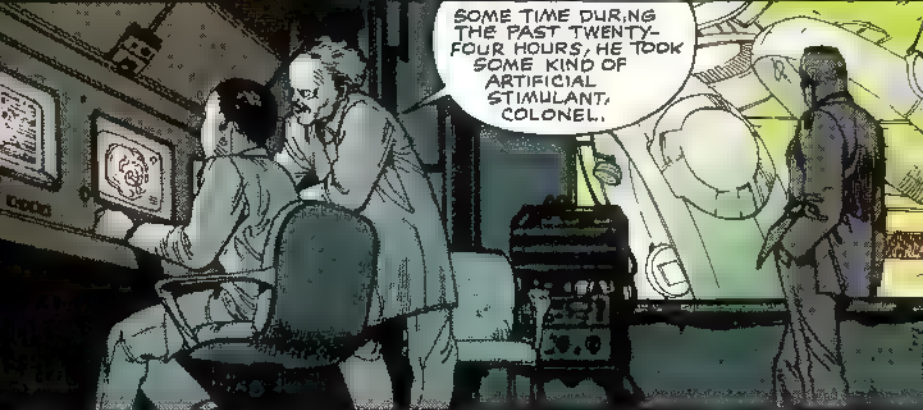
I HOPE MY  
BIKE WILL  
BE SAFE UP  
THERE



SHOULD BE.  
THIS IS A  
RESTRICTED  
AREA

BUT THE LAST FEW  
DAYS, THERE'S BEEN  
A LOT OF TRAFFIC  
HERE.

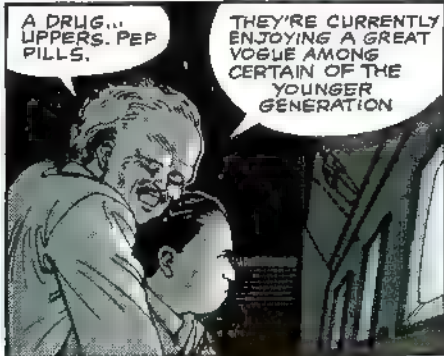




SOME TIME DURING  
THE PAST TWENTY-  
FOUR HOURS, HE TOOK  
SOME KIND OF  
ARTIFICIAL  
STIMULANT,  
COLONEL.

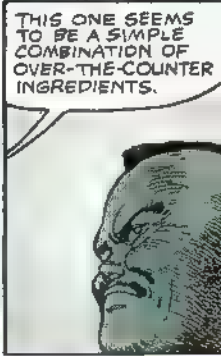


STIMULANT?



A DRUG...  
UPPERS. PEP  
PILLS.

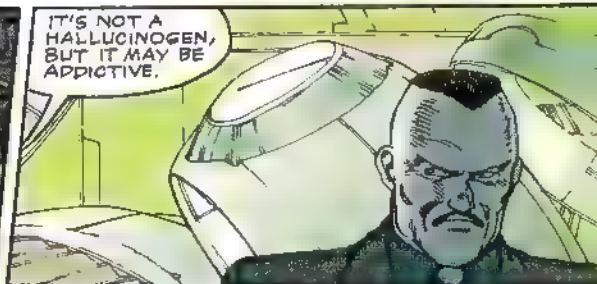
THEY'RE CURRENTLY  
ENJOYING A GREAT  
VOGUE AMONG  
CERTAIN OF THE  
YOUNGER  
GENERATION



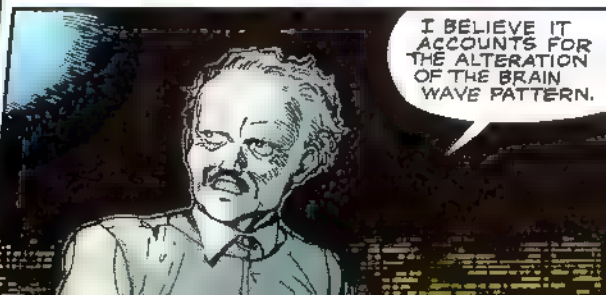
THIS ONE SEEMS  
TO BE A SIMPLE  
COMBINATION OF  
OVER-THE-COUNTER  
INGREDIENTS.



ANY REASONABLY  
SKILLED  
PHARMACIST  
COULD  
SYNTHESIZE  
IT.



IT'S NOT A  
HALLUCINOGEN,  
BUT IT MAY BE  
ADDICTIVE.



I BELIEVE IT  
ACCOUNTS FOR  
THE ALTERATION  
OF THE BRAIN  
WAVE PATTERN.





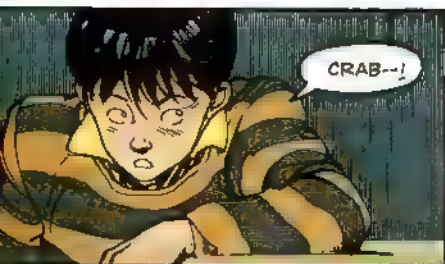
YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME IMMEDIATELY, KAY!

WE THOUGHT OUR REPORT TOOK PRECEDENCE.

ARE YOU SURE IT'S HIM?

DEFINITELY.

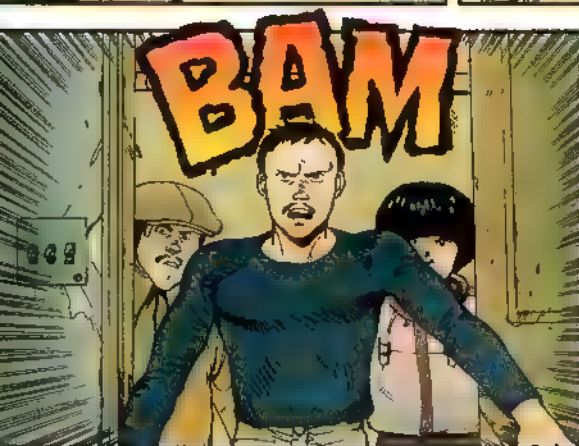
HERE?!



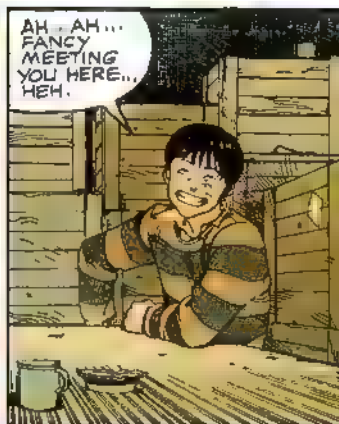
CRAB--!



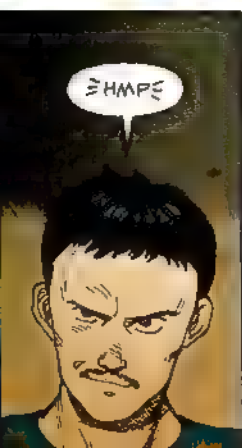
thump-thump-thump-thump



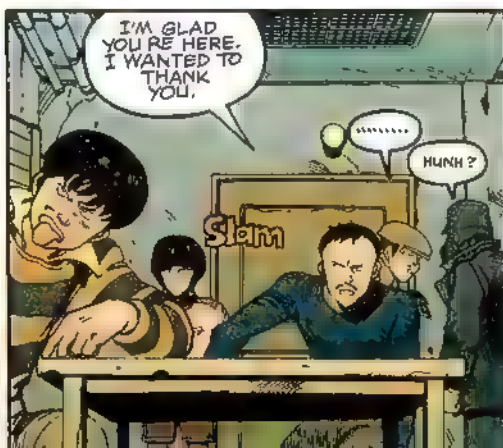
BAM



AH... AH... FANCY MEETING YOU HERE... HEH.



SHMP



I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE. I WANTED TO THANK YOU.

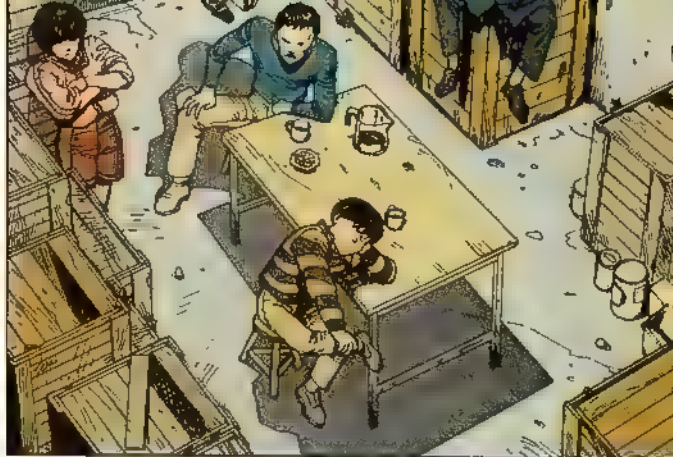
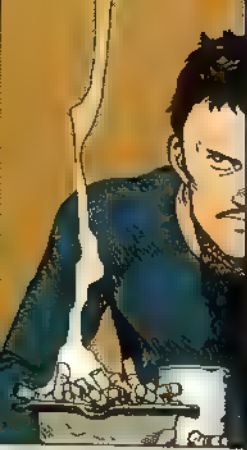
Slam

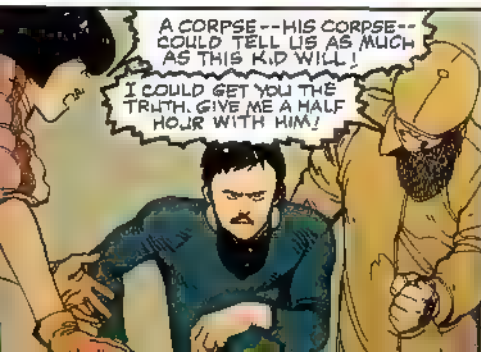
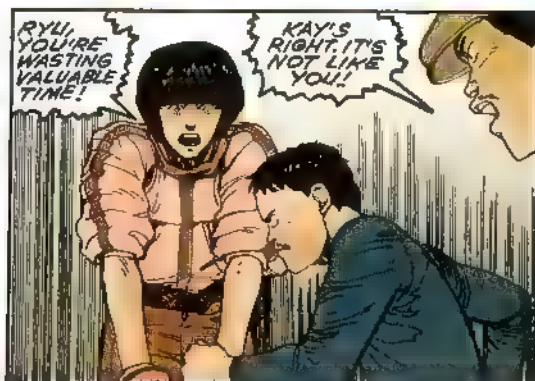
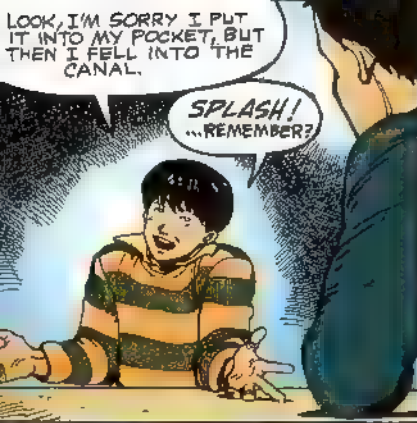
.....

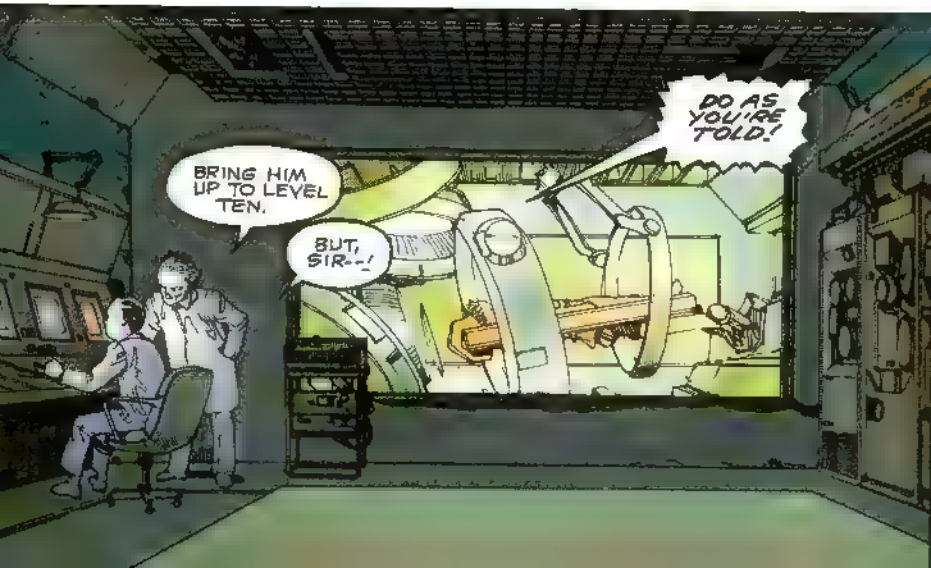
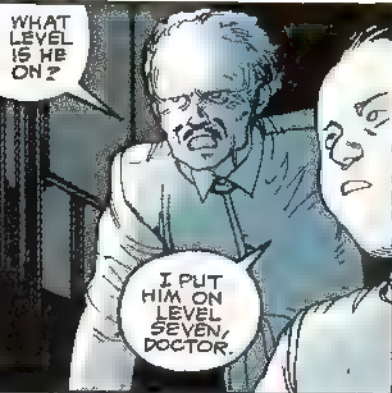
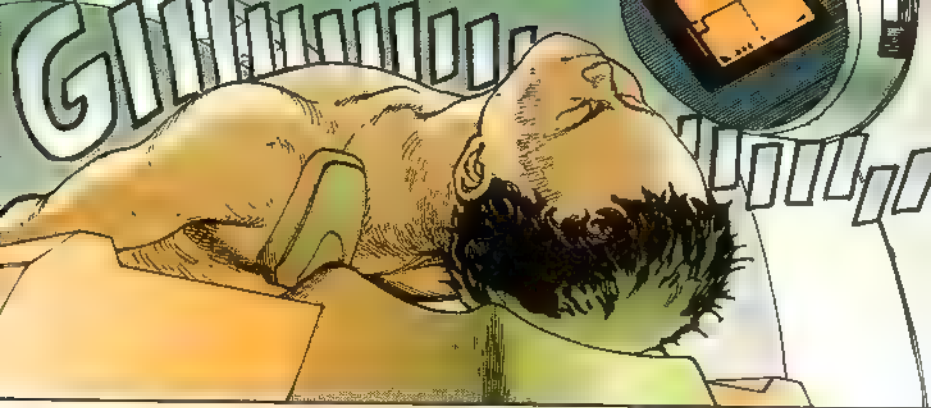
HUNH?

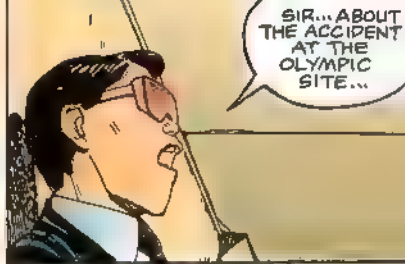
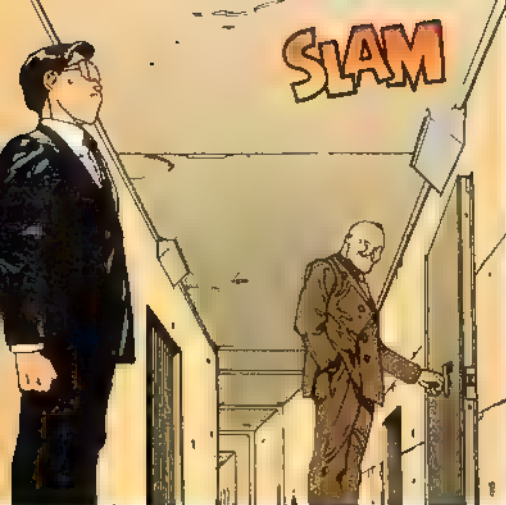


THANK...?

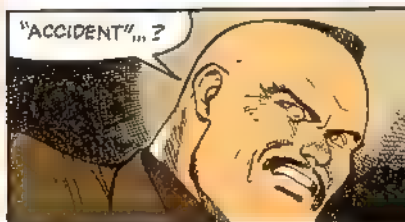




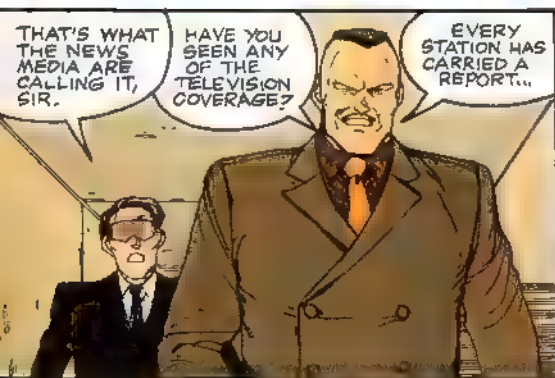




SIR... ABOUT  
THE ACCIDENT  
AT THE OLYMPIC  
SITE...



"ACCIDENT"... ?



THAT'S WHAT  
THE NEWS  
MEDIA ARE  
CALLING IT,  
SIR.

HAVE YOU  
SEEN ANY  
OF THE  
TELEVISION  
COVERAGE?

EVERY  
STATION HAS  
CARRIED A  
REPORT...



... ABOUT THE  
MILITARY'S  
COVERT  
INVOLVEMENT  
WITH THE  
STADIUM.



THAT WAS NO  
ACCIDENT!

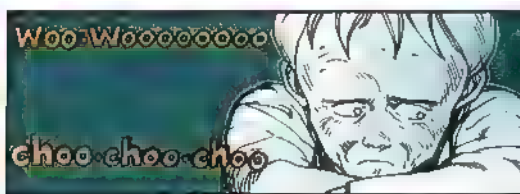
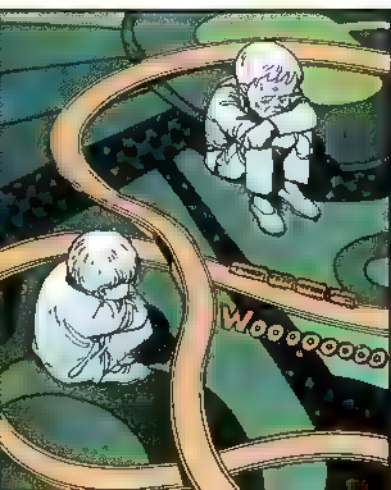
THEY WERE ALL  
CAREFULLY BRIEFED  
--BY SOMEONE  
WITH ACCESS TO  
THE MOST TOP  
SECRET INFORMA-  
TION. BE  
VIGILANT!

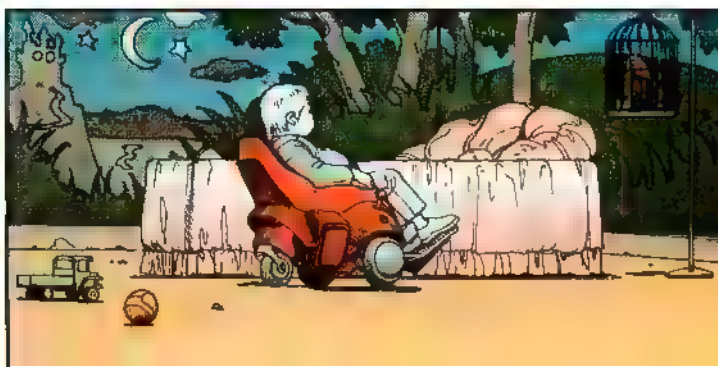
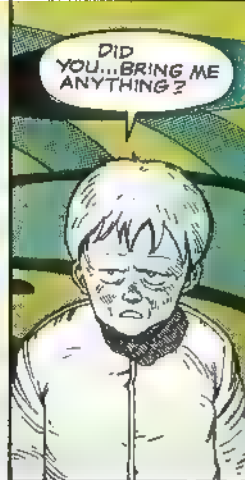
YESSIR!

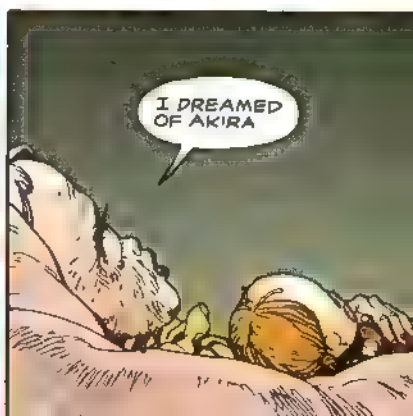
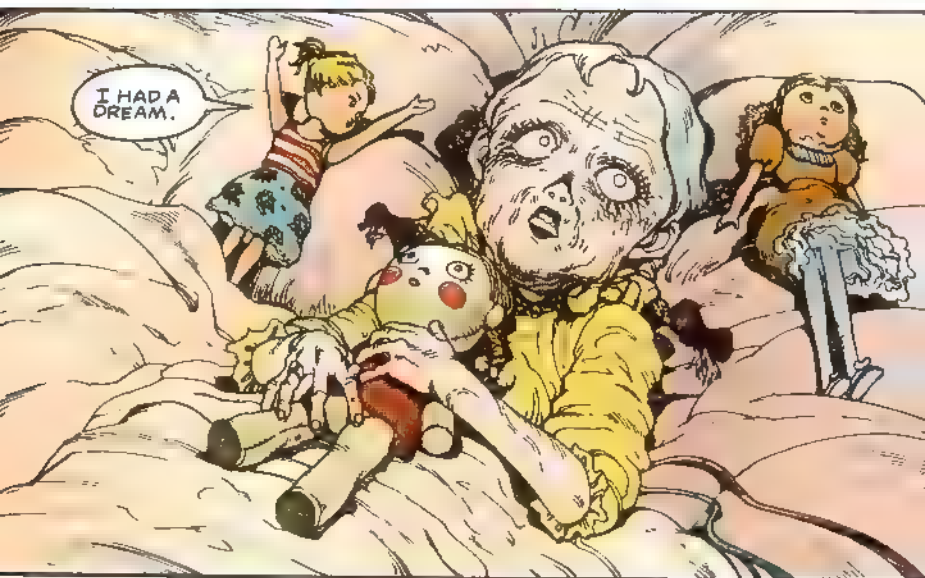
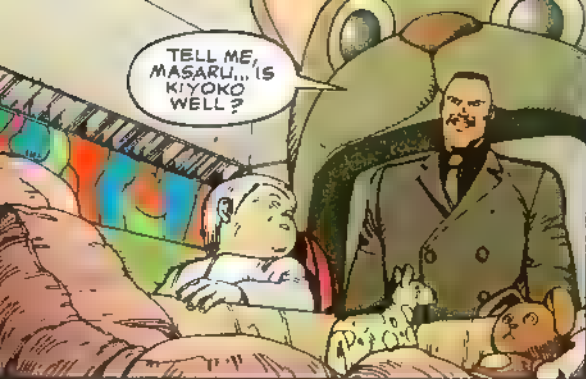


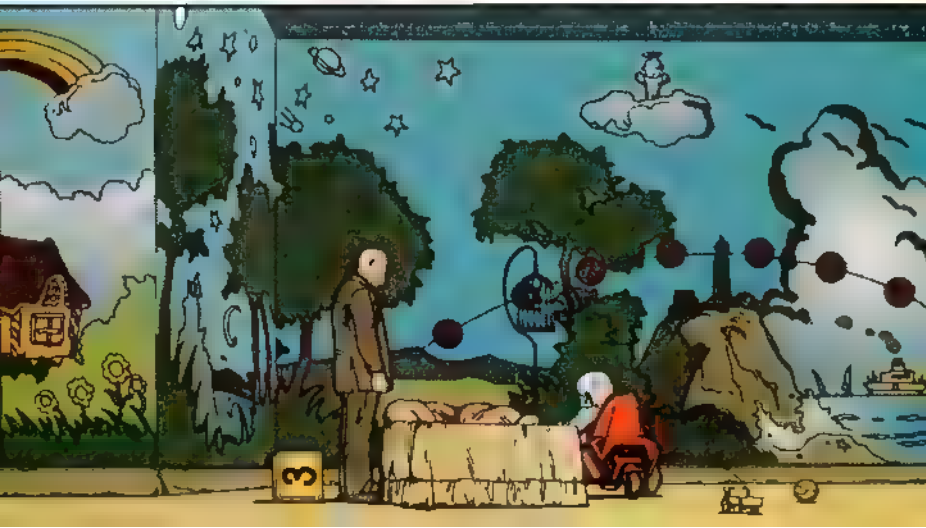
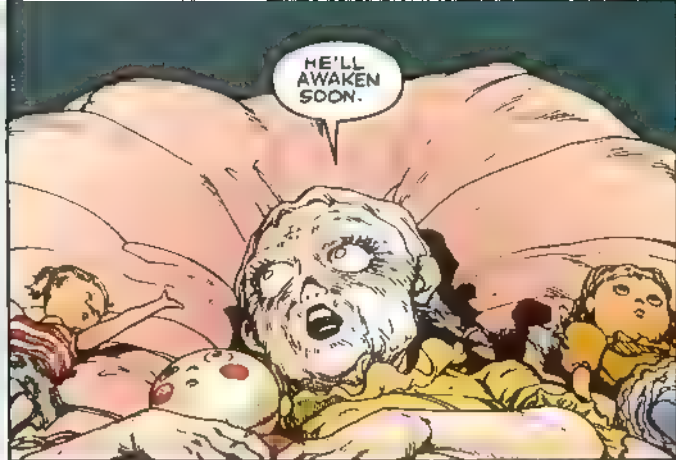
IF YOU GET  
ANY LEADS ON  
OUR TRAITOR,  
REPORT TO  
ME AT  
ONCE.

YES,  
COLONEL!











THIS IS AN  
EMERGENCY!  
CODE RED!!

WHO--?

ALERT ALL  
PERSONNEL!!



BLAST THE  
LUCK! THIS  
SHOULDN'T HAVE  
HAPPENED  
SO SOON!

I EXPECTED  
TO HAVE MORE  
TIME!

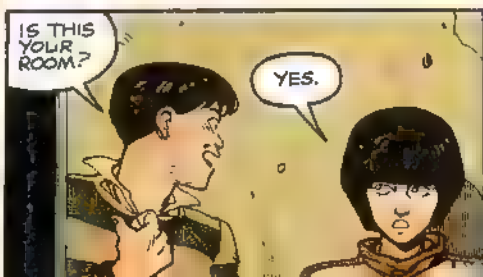


I THOUGHT HE  
WAS GONNA  
WORK ME  
OVER.



IN  
HERE

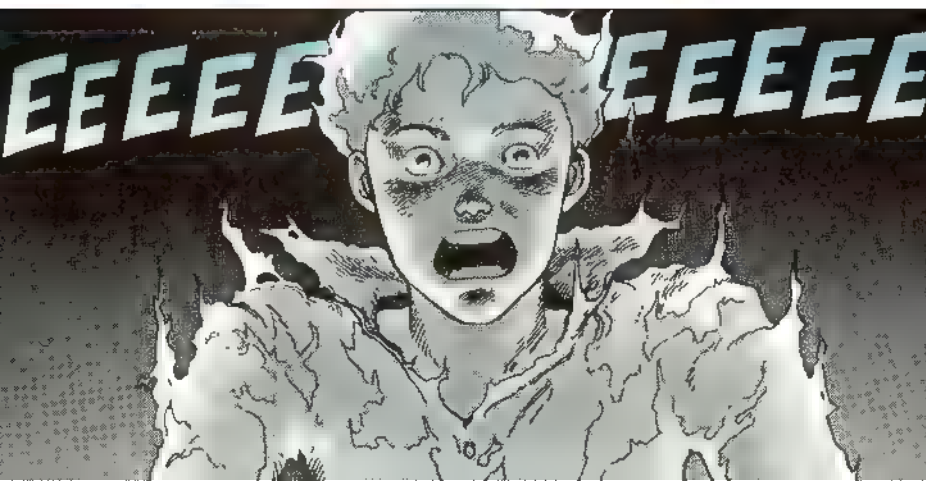
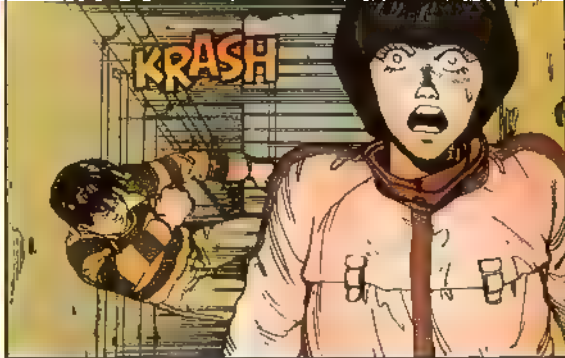
klik

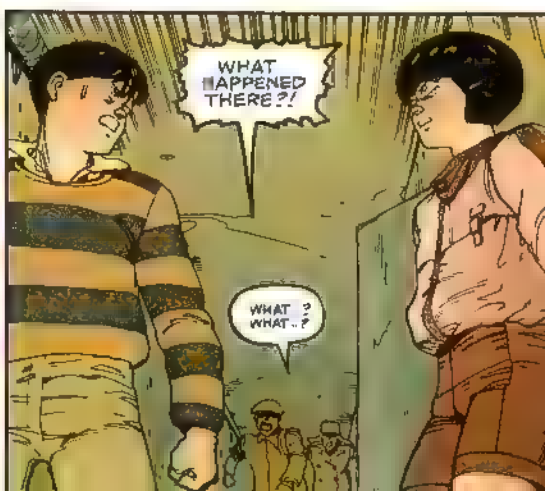
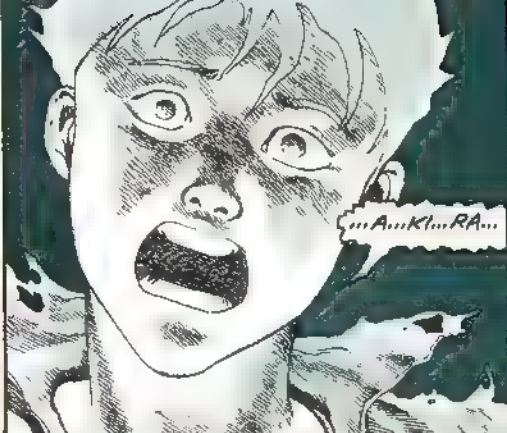


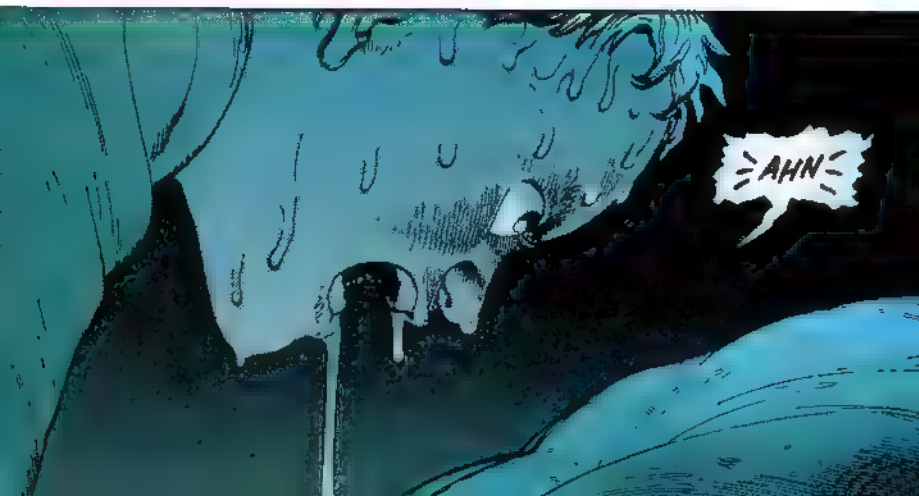
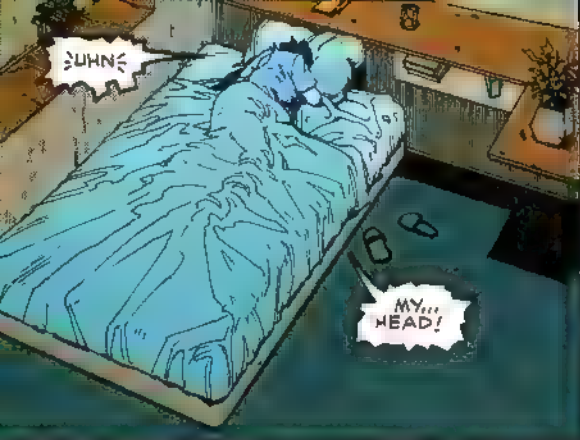
IS THIS  
YOUR  
ROOM?

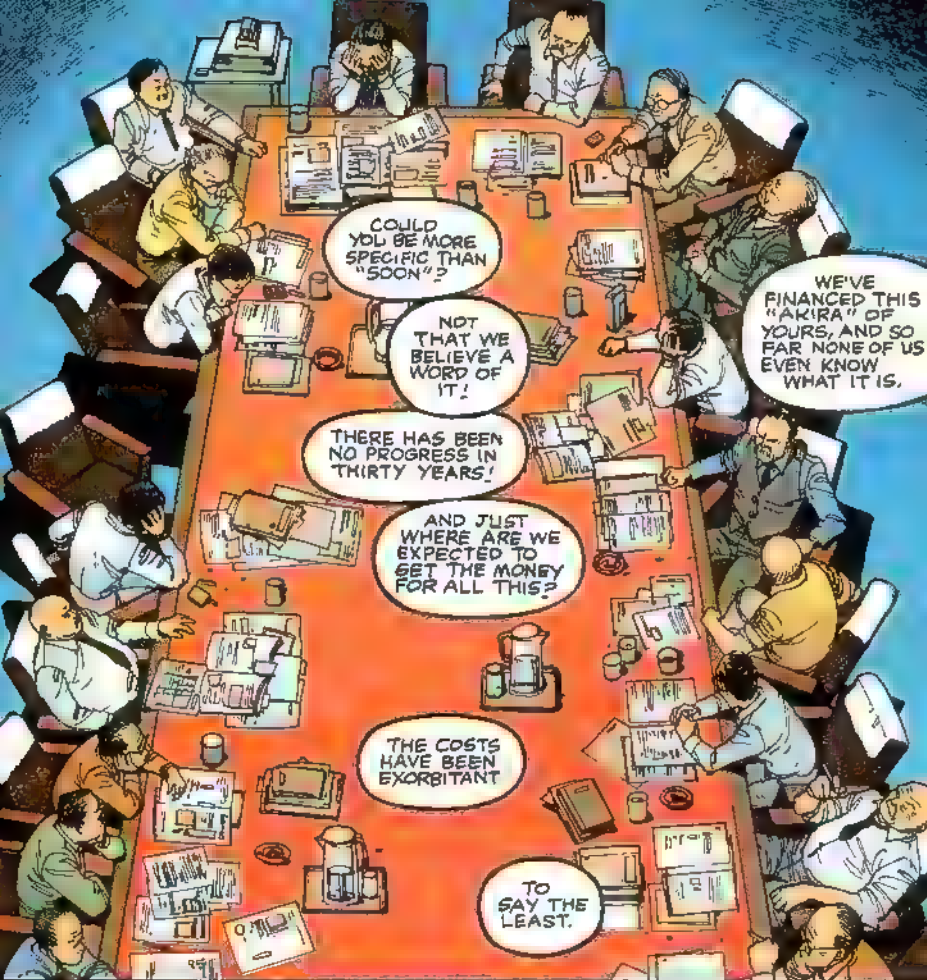
YES.











COULD  
YOU BE MORE  
SPECIFIC THAN  
"SOON"?

NOT  
THAT WE  
BELIEVE A  
WORD OF  
IT!

THERE HAS BEEN  
NO PROGRESS IN  
THIRTY YEARS!

AND JUST  
WHERE ARE WE  
EXPECTED TO  
GET THE MONEY  
FOR ALL THIS?

THE COSTS  
HAVE BEEN  
EXORBITANT

TO  
SAY THE  
LEAST.

WE'VE  
FINANCED THIS  
"AKIRA" OF  
YOURS, AND SO  
FAR NONE OF US  
EVEN KNOW  
WHAT IT IS.

ALL WE HAVE TO  
SHOW FOR OUR  
EXPENDITURES IS  
THAT GROTESQUE  
NURSERY.

AND THERE ARE THE  
UPCOMING OLYMPICS  
TO CONSIDER. WE  
MUST PUT THE WAR  
AND ITS MEMORIES  
BEHIND US. WE HAVE  
NO MONEY TO SPEND  
ON GHOSTS

THAT'S WHAT  
I'VE SAID ALL  
ALONG!

THE MONEY  
COULD HAVE  
GONE TO  
WELFARE.

SHUT  
UP!



THIS BICKERING IS POINTLESS!

I DIDN'T SUMMON YOU HERE SO I COULD LISTEN TO YOU ARGUE!

HOWEVER, AS SOME OF YOU ARRIVED AFTER THE BRIEFING,

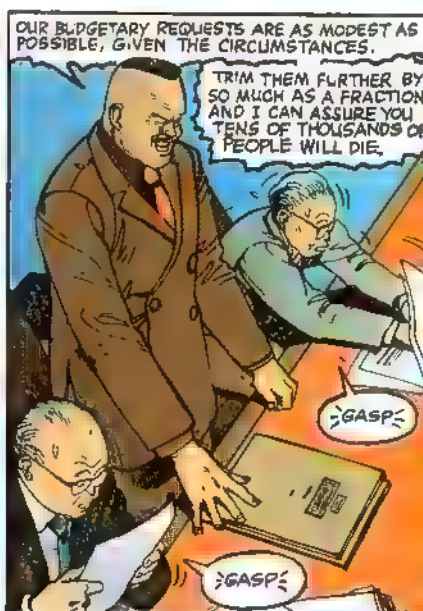


... AND MAY HAVE MISSED OUT ON VITAL INFORMATION...



... LET ME REPEAT...

... AKIRA WILL ARISE!!

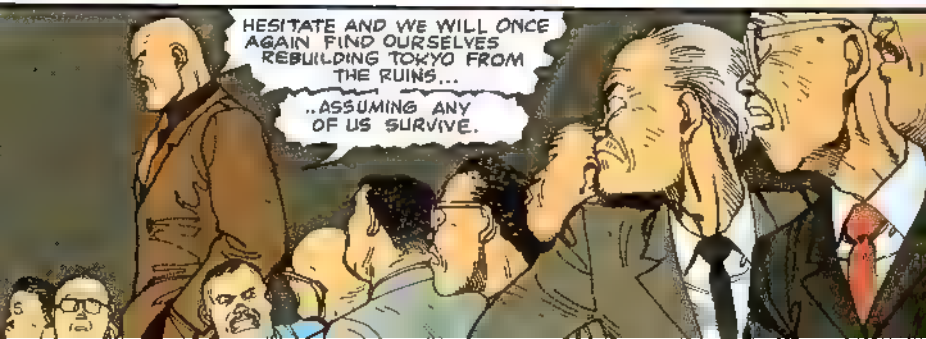


OUR BUDGETARY REQUESTS ARE AS MODEST AS POSSIBLE, GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

TRIM THEM FURTHER BY SO MUCH AS A FRACTION AND I CAN ASSURE YOU TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WILL DIE.

!GASP!

!GASP!



HESITATE AND WE WILL ONCE AGAIN FIND OURSELVES REBUILDING TOKYO FROM THE RUINS...

... ASSUMING ANY OF US SURVIVE.



AKIRA?!



THAT'S  
WHAT HE  
SAID.



NOT YOUR  
RUN-OF-THE-MILL  
VISITOR, WAS  
HE?



IT WAS WEIRD...  
BIZARRE...



YOU'RE CERTAIN  
IT WASN'T A  
HOLOGRAM?

NO... IT  
WAS A...  
A PRESENCE. I  
FELT  
HIM



COULD IT  
HAVE BEEN  
THE KID'S  
DOING?

I DON'T THINK SO.  
HE WAS SCARED  
TOO. IT SEEMED  
SOME WAY  
SIMILAR TO  
TAKASHI'S ENERGY,  
AND YET...  
DIFFERENT.

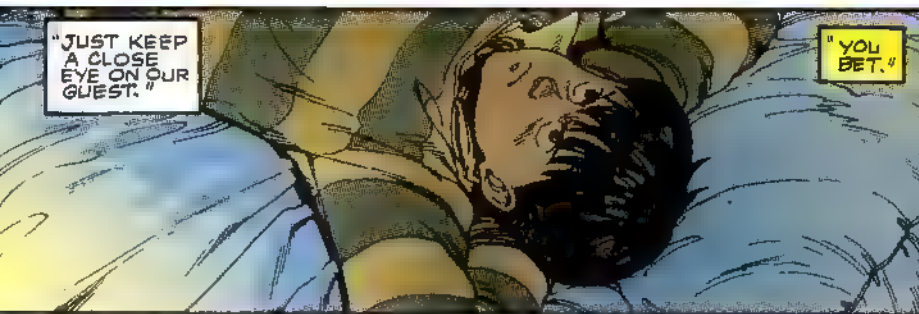


DIFFERENT...?



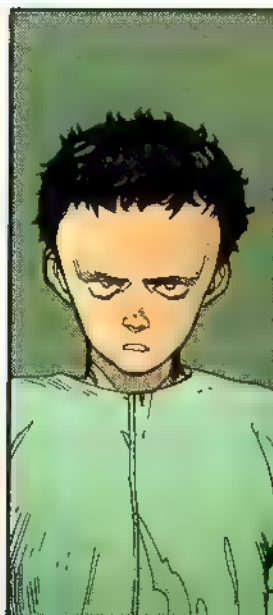
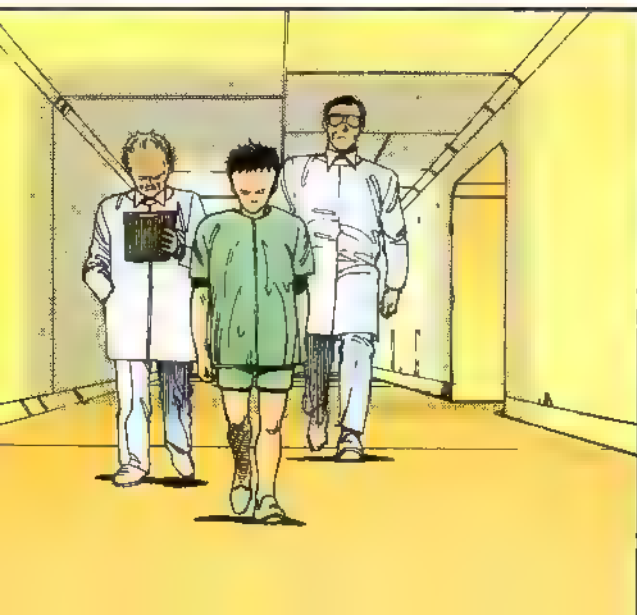
"AKIRA...?"

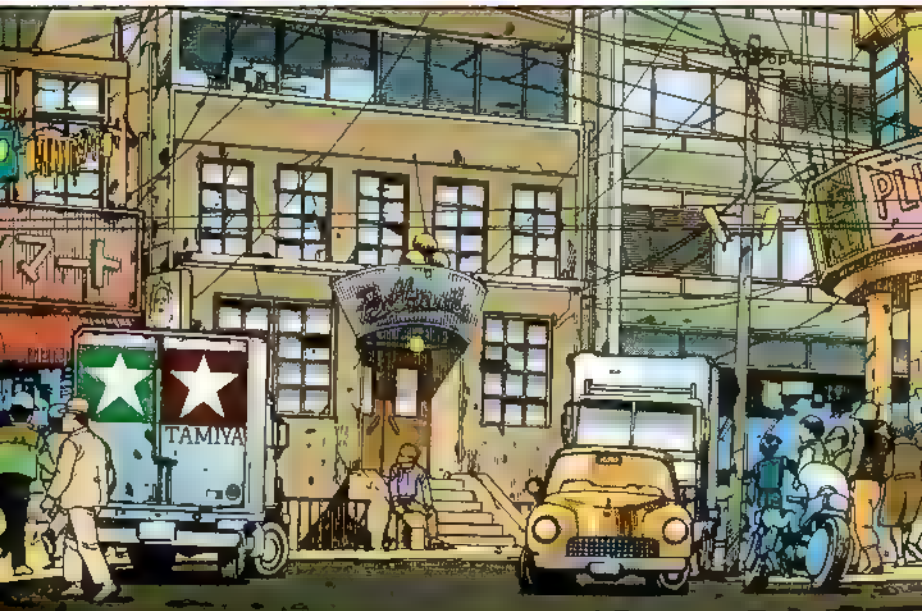
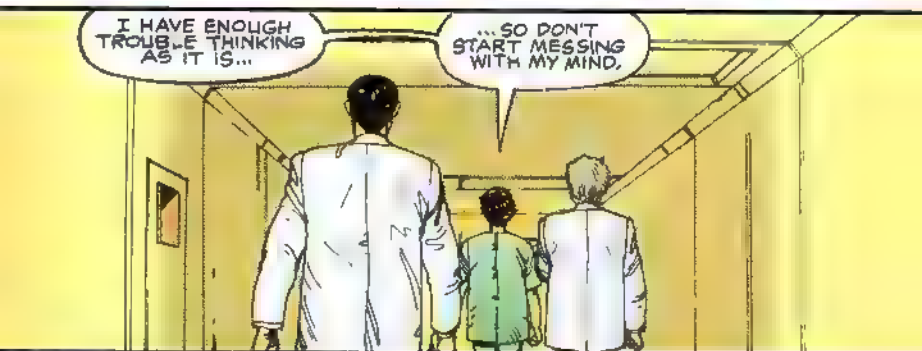
"DON'T ASK ME

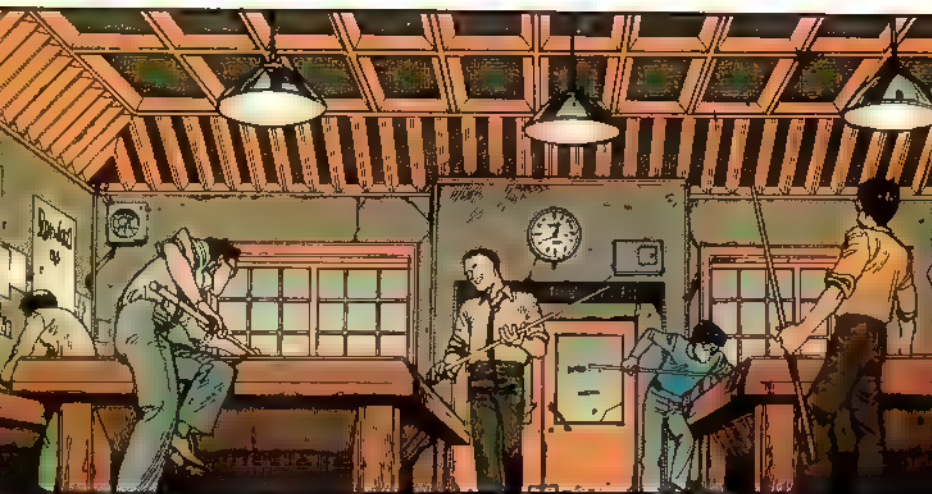


"JUST KEEP  
A CLOSE  
EYE ON OUR  
GUEST."

"YOU  
BET."

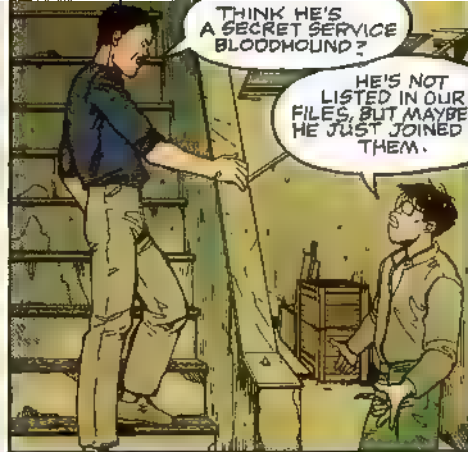








A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER...?

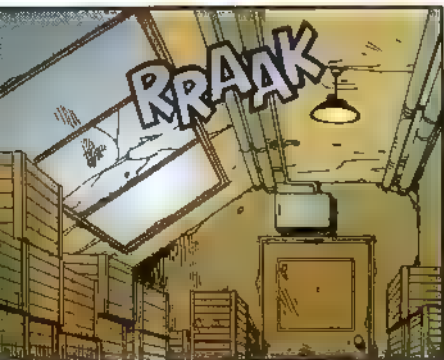


THINK HE'S A SECRET SERVICE BLOODHOUND?

HE'S NOT LISTED IN OUR FILES, BUT MAYBE HE JUST JOINED THEM.



HE'S BEEN HANGING AROUND FOR THE LAST WEEK



RRAAK



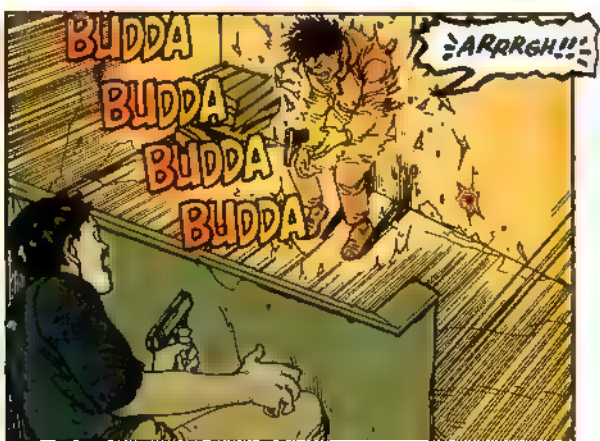
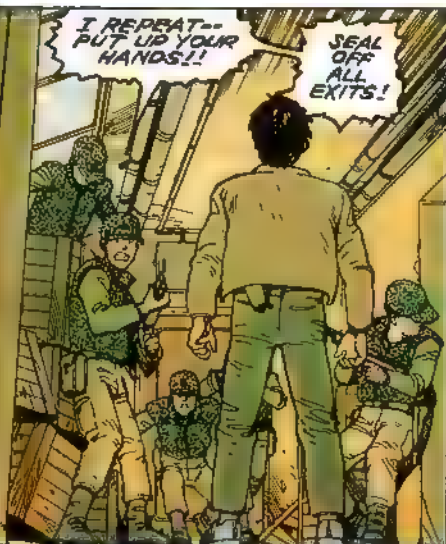
?!

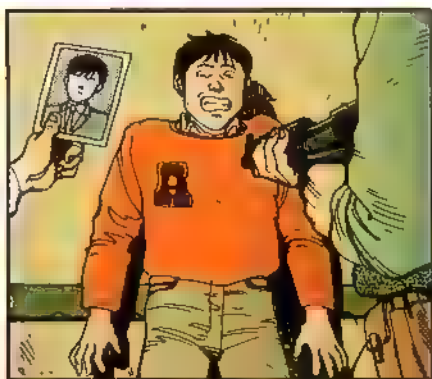
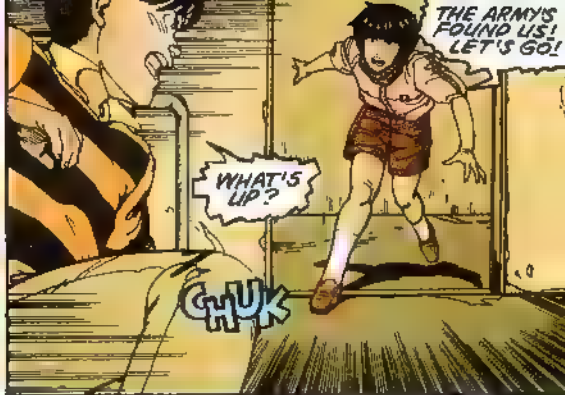
WHAT WAS THAT?!

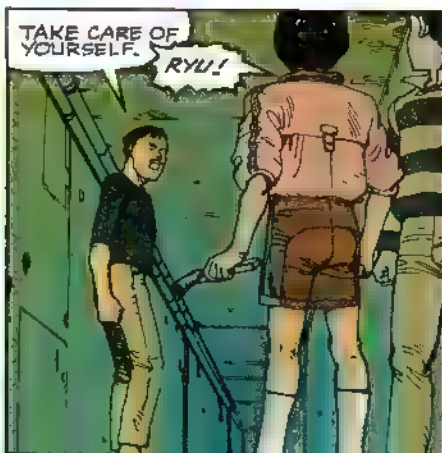
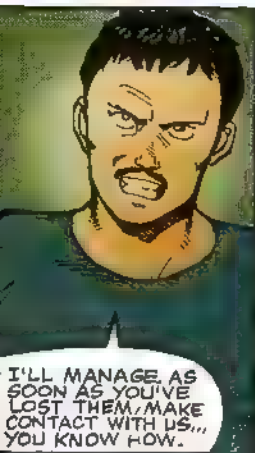
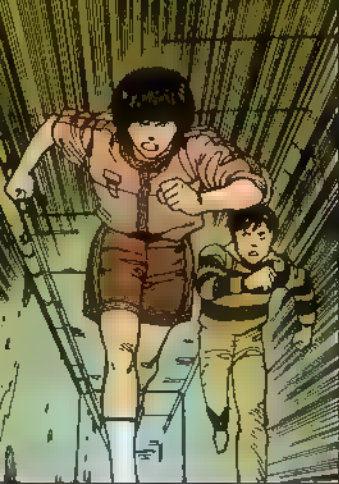
WHAT'S HAPPENING?

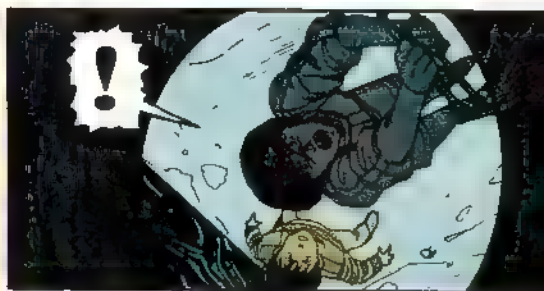
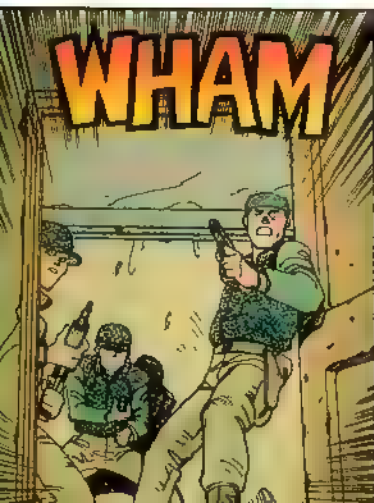
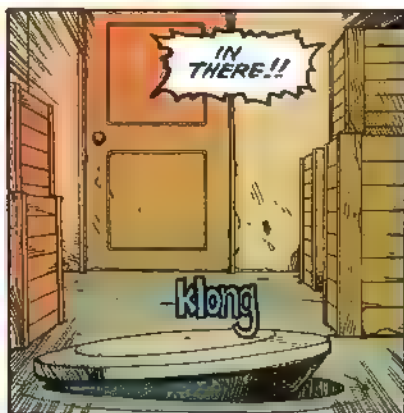
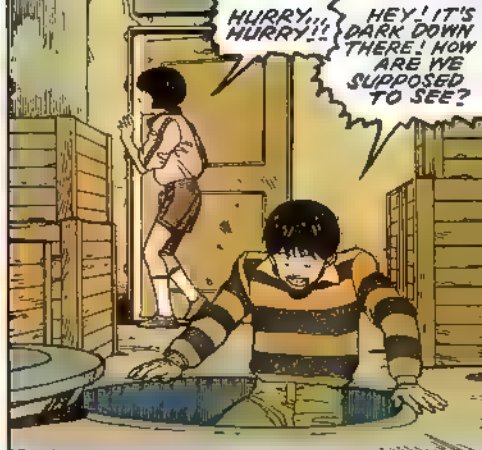


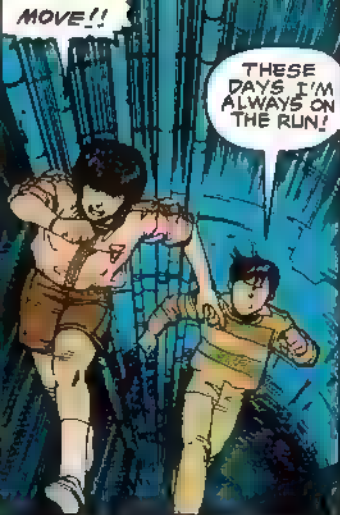
KRASH

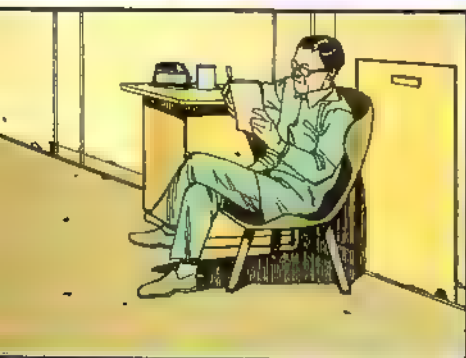
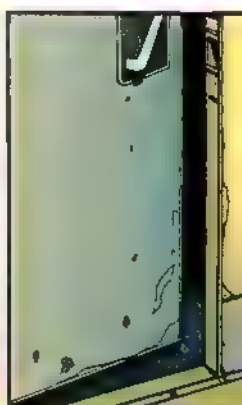
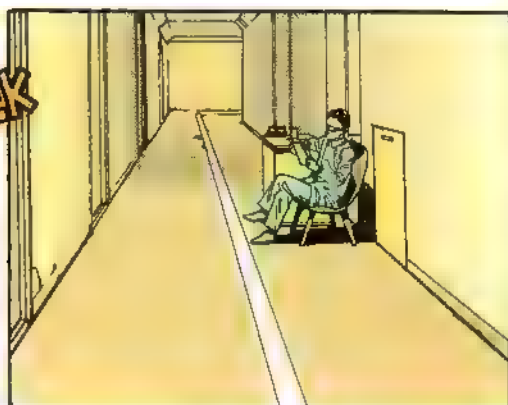
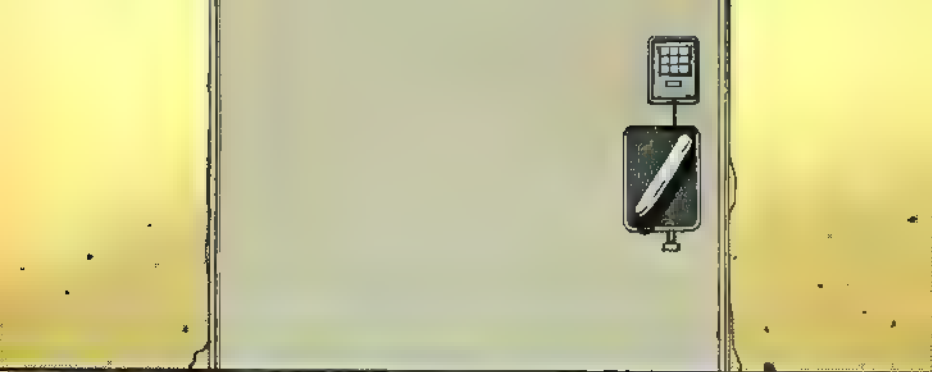


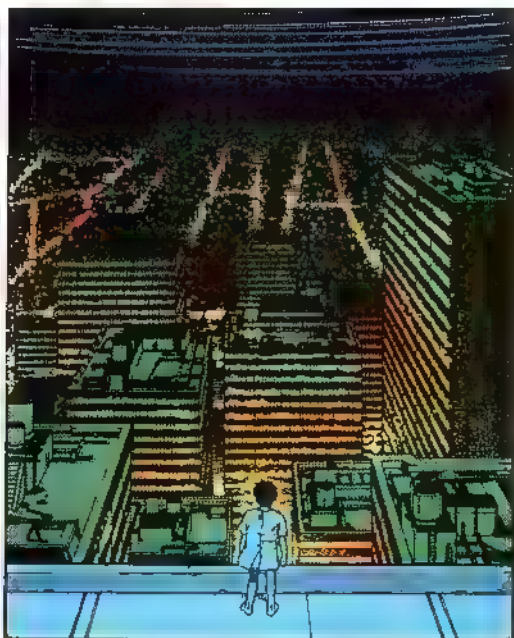


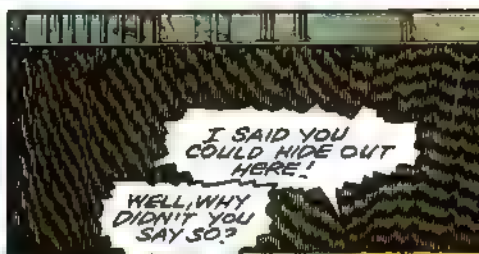
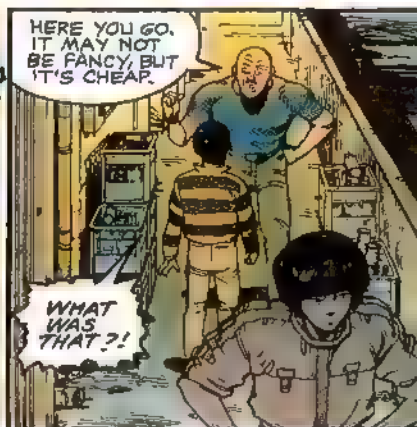


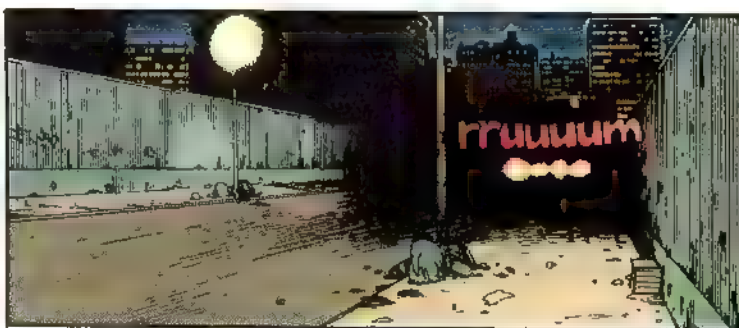
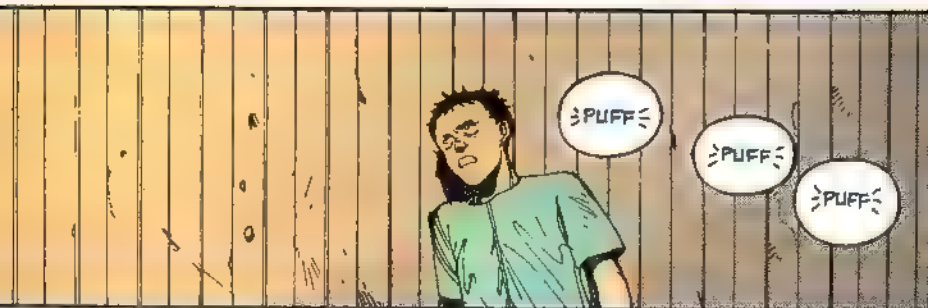


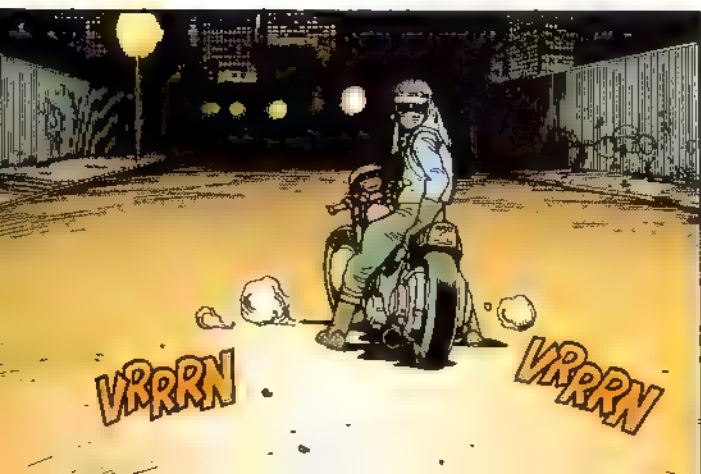


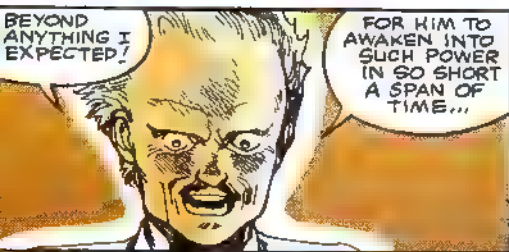




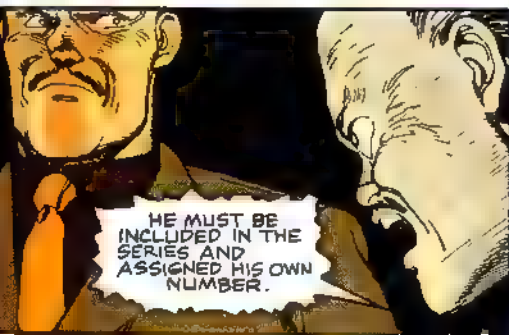




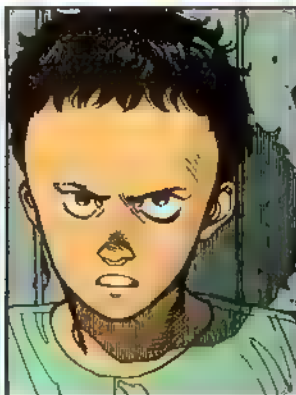
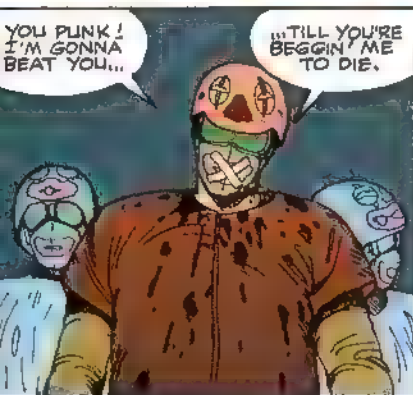
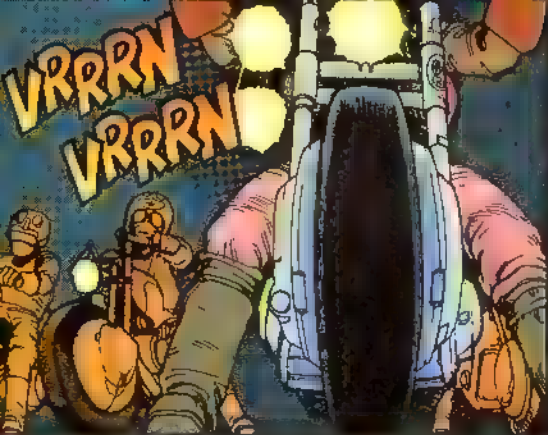


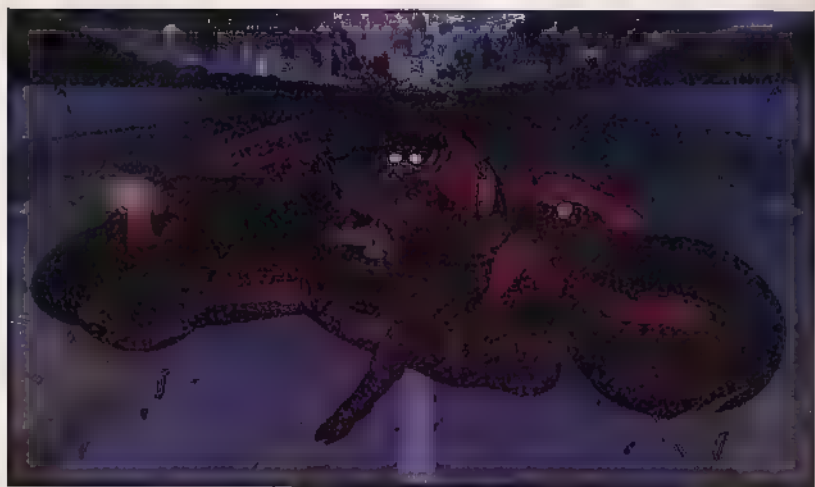


FOR HIM TO  
AWAKEN INTO  
SUCH POWER  
IN SO SHORT  
A SPAN OF  
TIME...



HE MUST BE  
INCLUDED IN THE  
SERIES AND  
ASSIGNED HIS OWN  
NUMBER.





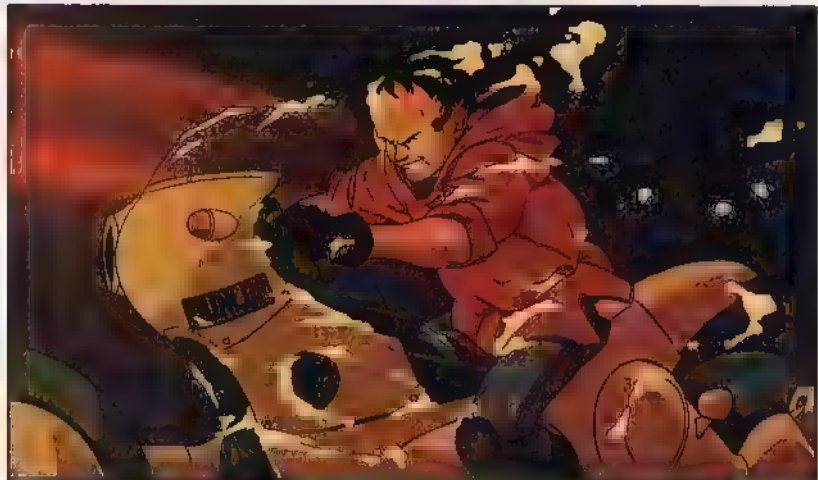
# AKIRA

THE ANIMATED MOVIE

Kaneda Tetsuo, and the rest of *Akira's* large cast have sprung into life and incredible motion. Katsuhiro Otomo has brought his post World War III epic from the comics to full animation in a feature film produced through the partnership of Kodansha Ltd., Mainichi Broadcasting System, Inc., Bandai Co., Ltd., Hakuhodo Incorporated; Toho Co., Ltd.; Laserdisc Corporation; Sumitomo Corporation; and Tokyo Movie Shinsha Co., Ltd.

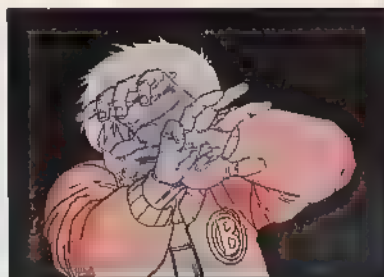


Otomo at Tokyo's Imperial Hotel for the press conference announcing the production of the film.



**I**n the United States, when a comic book or comic strip is turned into a film, the original creator's involvement will usually be limited to a consulting role. At times not even that. The final result which appears in theaters or on videotape often bears small resemblance to the creation it was based upon. No one can say that of the film version of *Akira*, which had its premiere in Tokyo on July 16th.

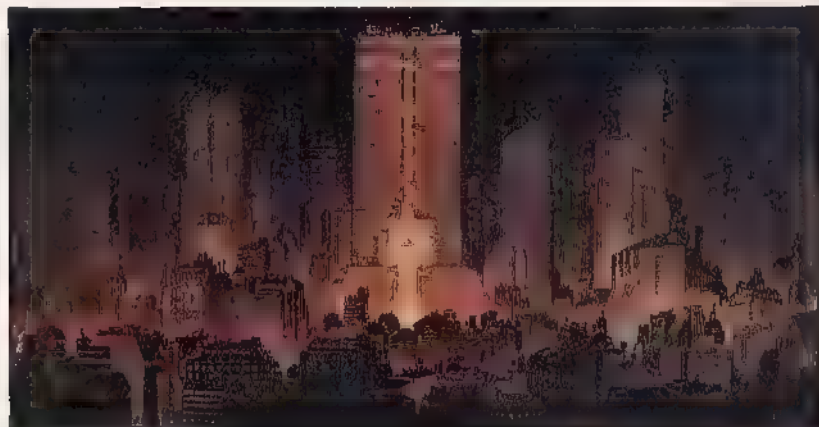
**K**atsuhiro Otomo has successfully managed the triple feat of handling the story, the screenplay (in cooperation with Izo Hashimoto), and the direction of the movie. In addition, Otomo also did the film's storyboards, taking six months off from his work on the comics feature in order to complete this important phase of production which sets into place the story's visual and narrative flow.



**C**an a saga designed for 1800 pages of comics fit into two hours of onscreen time? Otomo has boldly reconstructed the comic's storyline (not yet completed) keeping the same theme, but striving for greater simplicity to allow for full cinematic effect and to avoid the feeling of merely doing a 'digest version' of the comic book.

Visually, Otomo admires the fluid quality of the best Disney animation and has generated over 160,000 animation cells (a half hour of TV animation utilizes about 4000 cells) to achieve the results he wanted. An epic approach for an epic in animation.

**Above:** the animated Takashi, Number 26.  
**Below:** the Laboratory Building rises in the center of the Neo-Tokyo cityscape.



**KATSUHIRO OTOMO**

writer/illustrator

**YASUMITSU SUETAKE**

chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

**MAKOTO SHIOSAKI**

**SATOSHI TAKABATAKE**

assistants to Mr. Otomo

**HIROSHI HIRATA**

designer, AKIRA caligraph

**AKIRA SAITO**

designer, Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd.

**YOKO UMEZAWA**

with **LINDA M. YORN**

translation

**KOICHI YURI**

editor, Kodansha edition

**NORIYUKI OKAZAKI**

**YUKA ANDO**

editorial coordinators

Epic Comics

**JO DUFFY**

english adaptation

**STEVE OLIVE**

colorist

**MICHAEL HIGGINS**

letterer

**MIKE ROCKWITZ**

**HARRY CANDELARIO**

**MICHAEL HEISLER**

production

**MARK CHIARELLO**

editorial assistant, Epic edition

**ARCHIE GOODWIN**

editor, Epic edition

**T**hreads. Slowly intertwining. Coming together. Twisting tighter. The construction site for the coming Olympic games in post World War III Neo-Tokyo is rocked by an explosion, the work of anti-government rebels. In a secret government project controlled by the man known only as the Colonel, a wizened-faced child-woman awakens from a dream. Her dream is of someone called AKIRA. She dreams he will soon arise. On the streets, the young delinquent, Kaneda, object of government pursuit and rebel scrutiny, finds his authority over the motorcycle gang he leads suddenly challenged. The challenger is his friend, Tetsuo, who, following a mysterious highway accident, seems to be changing. Growing distant. Growing strange. Threads, Twisting, Tighter. Tighter until . . . something must break.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA



12



キア

ラ

